

# Recipes for Success

**97 Innovations  
and Solutions  
Developed by  
Emergency Food  
Providers in  
Washington State**





**Washington  
Food Coalition**

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**Washington  
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# Introduction

## Project Overview

*Recipes for Success* was developed as a part of a capacity building project initiated by the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). Washington Food Coalition (WFC) won a competitive bid process to implement the project, which included a series of nine regional outreach meetings with emergency food providers around Washington State, numerous in-person and telephone interviews with individuals, an online survey of providers, and action research to discover and document some of the things that are working best in the provision of emergency food to hungry Washington residents. This outreach was completed by WFC staff, with assistance from Laura Pierce, Laura Pierce Consulting, and Cory Sbarbaro. The research took place between July 2006 and June 2007.

## Goals of this Catalog

We hope this catalog will serve the following purposes:

- Inspire emergency food programs across the state to innovate and adopt effective strategies to better address hunger in their communities
- Recognize and celebrate programs that have developed and are already using best practices
- Encourage dialogue and networking among providers to solve common problems and share successes for the benefit of all our communities Statewide
- Provide community partners with ideas about the many ways they can get involved in fighting hunger
- Educate funders and public officials about the issues emergency food programs face and some promising solutions that are worthy of investment

## What are Recipes for Success?

Recipes for Success are best practices. A best practice is a good strategy for handling a challenge in your emergency food program's operations or service delivery. It solves a problem in a new way, and might be something other organizations could learn from or replicate. Examples of best practices in emergency food might be:

- An efficient way of taking inventory
- Adjusting open hours to fit customers' schedules
- A partnership with a local farmer to provide fresh food where there was a gap
- A successful way of recruiting community volunteers

Some people object to the term “best practice” on the grounds that it is difficult to determine the very best approach, or that what is best in one circumstance may not be best in a different operating environment. However, we have chosen to use this term because it is the most widely used term to describe the types of ideas we have tried to identify. Other similar terms that might be equally appropriate are: good practice, better practice, effective strategy, great idea, solution, promising practice and innovative approach.

We are also trying to model best practice in the language that we use. Throughout the catalog, we have replaced the term “client” with “customer”, “diner” or another term with positive connotations. This decision reflects our commitment to treating all people with respect, and supporting a shift in the way we think about food programs — from casting them as an emergency social service to believing they are an integral part of the fabric of the community.



## How the Catalog is Organized:

Best practice profiles are organized into five major categories:

- Food & Nutrition
- Customer Service
- Community Relations
- Transportation
- Organizational Strength & Capacity

In each category, short summaries describe best practices related to that topic. We hope some of these short summaries will spark your interest in doing something differently in your program. In addition, we have highlighted a few issues of common interest through longer sidebar articles. In addition, to help you identify practices that may be particularly relevant to your type of program, we have coded each best practice using the following symbols:



**FOOD BANKS**



**MEAL PROGRAMS**



**DISTRIBUTION CENTERS**



**SOMETHING EVERYONE  
CAN BORROW FROM**

In the rear of the catalog, you will find a list of contacts for each emergency food program profiled in the catalog. We encourage you to contact them for more information, while being respectful of their time. Washington Food Coalition can also be a link between programs.

## A Starting Point

This catalog is not an exhaustive list of best practices, but a first step to build capacity among emergency food providers. These are good ideas and innovative approaches that were nominated by peers or came to our attention during the research period. In some cases, we were aware that several organizations were doing similar things, and have chosen to highlight a single example. An effort has been made to recognize and highlight the diversity present among emergency food providers, including geographic region, organization size and age, staffing levels, communities served, and type of program. We made a special effort to identify innovation taking place in more rural areas, in all volunteer organizations and in spite of other challenging circumstances. We hope that this catalog will jumpstart conversation about best practices and inspire our community to continue discussing what constitutes a best practice, and how we can best share knowledge among programs to promote high quality, responsive programs. WFC would be delighted to hear from you about the “best ideas we haven’t yet heard” and help to spread the word about them in the future.

# Food & Nutrition

In the category of food, emergency food programs are striving to bring quality, high nutrition foods in sufficient quantities to hungry people in the community. These efforts vary from programs that access garden and farm produce to an emphasis on whole grains, low salt and unprocessed food offerings. Efforts of emergency food programs are getting the attention of funders and policy makers as well. As awareness builds regarding the food-related health disparities facing low-income people, such as elevated rates of obesity and diabetes, grantmakers and donors are expressing greater interest in ensuring that everyone in our community has equal access to fresh, healthy foods. The best practices below are organized into four categories: fresh and healthy options, responding to specific dietary needs, customer education, and increasing quantity, quality and variety. General best practices in the food area include:

- Increasing relationships with local gardeners, farmers and farmers markets to increase the flow of fresh fruits and vegetables into food banks and meal programs
- Adjusting offerings for people with special diets or limited access to cooking facilities
- Increased responsiveness to customers' cultural requirements, including offering staples sought by specific ethnic communities
- Declining or limiting non-nutritive food offerings

## Fresh and Healthy Options

### Keeping it Fresh: Farmers Market Vouchers

University District Food Bank  
Seattle



University District Food Bank (UDFB) is lucky to have the well-established University District Farmers Market as a neighbor. The two organizations have developed a program which allows the food bank to distribute farmers market vouchers to customers. Customers are offered three \$2 vouchers (for a total of \$6) once a month from May through October. The vouchers can be redeemed at any vendor for fruit, vegetables, honey, fish or other foods. Vendors use the vouchers toward their stall fees, and the Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance — organizers of the market — requests reimbursement from UDFB once a month. The program ensures that people who use UDFB have greater access to fresh, high quality and nutritious foods. “This is a way for us to make sure that folks are getting produce that is most relevant to their needs — produce that means something to them,” says Executive Director Joe Gruber. “It’s also a way for us to give back to the market and the vendors that support us with donations.”

UDFB sets a budget for voucher reimbursement each year, and monitors the rate of reimbursements throughout the year to stay on target. One of the tricky things about budgeting is that only about one third of vouchers issued are actually redeemed. Also, some customers may save up vouchers for several months before shopping. UDFB’s program has grown to \$8,500 in reimbursements per year, and about half the funds come from grants and targeted donations by organizations that love the program. Donations from Puget Consumers Coop (PCC) and the Kiwanis Club helped start the program years ago.

**What it Takes:** A program like this requires a strong commitment from the partnering farmers market. Talk to your local market’s organizers to find out if they are interested and able to support a program. The Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance makes sure that its vendors are comfortable participating. Farmers and market organizers have to trust that they will be reimbursed quickly, and outreach will need to be done initially to establish that trust and willingness to accept vouchers. Also, make sure the people coming to your food bank want to participate. UDFB’s customers find the University District Farmers Market accessible, but other food banks have tried to replicate the program with lesser results, perhaps because their customers aren’t able to travel to the market easily on market day or because the voucher amount offered isn’t significant enough to warrant the trip. UDFB does make an effort to create a voucher that is hard to counterfeit (dark colored paper, changes color each season, and a special stamp on the back), although they haven’t had any trouble in this area. Design and printing of the vouchers is a minimal cost. Consider how you will market the program to customers, especially if they speak multiple languages.



## Getting Real: “Eat Real Food” Campaign

Meals Partnership Coalition  
Seattle



Meals Partnership Coalition (MPC) is a long-standing coalition of meal programs in the Seattle area. The coalition has evolved over the years from a network that provided a forum for support and information sharing among meal program staff, to advocating in the public policy arena. The coalition's most recent endeavor is the “Eat Real Food” campaign that encourages donors to buy local, fresh food. The campaign educates donors about the value of healthful foods and the dangers of irradiated, genetically modified, and other less natural and fresh food. Donors are then asked to buy local and “buy from the top of the bin rather than the bottom.” The campaign also encourages meal program providers to do such things as improve their standards by using whole grains, replacing yogurt with sour cream to reduce fat, and checking existing shelf items for non-chemical ingredients, just to name few.

**What it Takes:** In order to launch a similar campaign in your community, it helps to garner political support. Collaboration and relationship building in the nonprofit, public and private sectors is necessary to make changes happen. MPC Chair Beverly Graham comments, “When you can get public and private agencies to come to the table, that’s when great things happen.”

## “V” — for Vegetable, for Victory

Bellingham Food Bank  
Bellingham



Bellingham Food Bank’s (BFB) “Victory Garden Food Drive” encourages home gardeners to bring extra produce to the food bank. The home garden donation program helps BFB serve hungry people by significantly increasing the availability of fresh produce for customers. BFB raises awareness of the program and promotes local food security through distribution of simple brochures and promotional materials to local gardening businesses and community groups. In 2005, BFB received over 20,000 pounds of food donated by Whatcom County home gardeners. The Victory Garden program has substantially increased the amount of fresh produce donated to families during summer and fall months. “We didn’t decide to do it so much as it was done to us,” comments Mike Cohen, Executive Director. “We were receiving a lot of produce from gardens, and treated it like regular donations. Then the editor of *The Bellingham Business Journal* got interested, and he decided to give it a shape, a name and sponsorship. It’s a wonderful way to get fresh produce in and to involve another segment of the community in our work.”

**What it Takes:** Cohen stresses the importance of convenience for donors, and recommends that the receiving agency be open for donation drop-offs at least five days a week. You need people power to manage and sort donations, and the ability to distribute produce while still fresh. Once you have the logistics handled, it is important to conduct outreach to educate the community about the need for fresh produce. Remember that this message is counter to the usual one of “donate your non-perishables,” so you’ll be shifting messages and changing expectations. Garden shops, local events and farmers markets are good avenues to reach home gardeners, and local press and radio coverage will help as well.



## Raising the Bar: Setting Higher Standards

Operation Sack Lunch  
Seattle



Operation Sack Lunch (OSL) espouses the ideal that nutritional excellence should not be tied to economic status. Founder and Executive Director Beverly Graham says, “food has an immense amount of power in our lives from the moment we are born. When you are given food that is not quality, a feeling of unworth surrounds that. When we are working with a population that already has issues of being treated as if they don’t have worth, giving them food suitable for the trash sends the wrong message.”

OSL acts on their philosophy by buying organic whenever possible, doing a pesticide/herbicide wash on most foods, and prioritizing buying and serving fresh, quality produce at every meal. They offer a hot meal each day that includes fresh vegetables, fruit and salad greens. They don’t use food containing artificial coloring, preservatives, additives, sugar, or trans fats. The OSL kitchen uses environmentally friendly cleaning supplies and a Thermal Accelerated Nano Crystal Sanitation (TANCS) steamer system for sanitizing the kitchen.

**What it Takes:** According to Graham, programs seeking to move in the direction of healthy, quality foods need to be open to learning and shift their thinking to operate from a place of abundance rather than a scarcity mentality. “You need to be able to be gentle with your donors,” says Graham, “and be able to say: I appreciate that you brought a pallet of Twinkies®, but that’s not what we serve our customers. Do you have lettuce instead?” It’s a slow process of education, and it helps to be open to new learning yourself.

## Bringing it Together: Lettuce Link

Lettuce Link, Solid Ground  
Seattle



The primary goal of Solid Ground’s Lettuce Link (LL) program is to connect people with limited incomes to fresh, organic, locally grown produce. A secondary benefit of the program is that it engages people in understanding and fighting hunger. They do this in many ways.

One way is by encouraging and supporting urban P-Patch — Seattle’s community gardens — gardeners to grow extra and glean from their own garden plots to share with food banks. Last year, through the efforts of P-Patch gardeners 28,000 lbs. of fresh produce was distributed to over 30 participating emergency food providers. To do this, LL meets with gardeners each year, contacting them regularly through the growing season, and solicits participation from emergency food providers. Emergency food provider participation rests in part on proximity to the garden and availability to receive donations. Depending on P-Patch location, gardeners will either work collectively or individually with emergency food providers. LL also provides the seeds, plant starts, and logistic support to help gardeners get started, which helps ensure programs receive desired items. “Ideally, we plant the seed with the gardeners, and then they develop the relationship with the food bank, shelter, or meal program. In some gardens, all I do is provide seeds, others need more support,” says Michelle B. Benetua, Program Manager.

Additionally, LL has developed a number of other innovative projects which increase public awareness about hunger and promote food security. Through the community fruit tree harvest project, volunteers glean fruit from neighborhood trees, which would otherwise go to waste, and donate to emergency food providers. LL encourages self-sufficiency by showing people how to grow their own vegetables, and by visiting local food banks multiple times with free seeds, gardening information and plant starts. These services are especially utilized by recent immigrants.

At Marra Farm, 4-acres of preserved historic farmland, LL has established a 3/4 acre Giving Garden where volunteers and elementary school children learn about sustainable agriculture by raising organic vegetables for the neighborhood food bank, Providence Regina House. Since the neighborhood has a large Latino population, the Giving Garden grows tomatoes, peppers, cilantro, and tomatillos, in addition to other crops that grow well in Seattle. A major benefit of all of LL’s projects is that they involve different parts of the community in hunger issues; engaging people who enjoy fresh, local food and want to share.

**What it Takes:** The main requirement to get a program like Lettuce Link started in your community is to identify an existing organization or individual to connect with different parts of the community. Participating in gardening events and service clubs is a great way to start.

# Responding to Specific Dietary Needs

## Just for You: Meals for People with Special Dietary Needs

Lifelong AIDS Alliance  
Seattle



Lifelong AIDS Alliance (LLA) provides practical support services to people living with HIV/AIDS and other life-challenging illnesses. LLA's meal program, Chicken Soup Brigade, is specifically designed to provide healthy meals and accommodate special diets. The food program manager and dietitian work together to design meals for 17 different types of diets, including allergy-free, heart healthy, renal failure, vegetarian, and special religious diets.

People are qualified and referred by case managers at agencies such as People of Color Against AIDS Network and the Northwest Kidney Center, and the referral includes a nutrition screening. If the customer is at high risk, they provide nutrition therapy. LLA purchases most ingredients for their meal program because of their customers' compromised immune systems and the program's elaborate menu planning. Another way in which LLA strives to meet its customers' needs is by providing delivery to several satellite locations throughout King County. These delivery hubs are at locations such as churches and community centers. A volunteer receives the food delivery packed in cooler bags from LLA's refrigerated delivery truck. They then hand out the meals during a 2-3 hour window of time.

**What it Takes:** To offer a special diet meal program, you have to be able to analyze the meals for nutrition content. Computer software is the easiest method. The first step is analyzing your regular meals, and then figuring out how to adapt them to meet special dietary requirements. LLA also hires skilled kitchen staff to ensure and maintain quality, although volunteers help with many tasks such as packaging, labeling and sorting meals. Developing a labeling system is also very important to avoid a customer receiving an incorrect meal.

## Honoring Tradition: Culturally Appropriate Foods

Asian Counseling and Referral Service  
Seattle



Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) specializes in serving Asian Pacific Americans (APA), and their customers come from diverse backgrounds. Bilingual/bicultural staff and volunteers speak more than 30 different languages, so they are able to understand and provide appropriate assistance to their customers. The ACRS Food Bank distributes foods that meet APA's dietary needs including tofu, soy milk, ramen, fish and 3,200 pounds of rice each week. Because many of these items are not regularly available in the donation stream, ACRS purchases many of them. Culturally appropriate food is just one aspect of the ways in which ACRS works to meet the culturally-specific needs of customers.

ACRS also has a convenient location in Seattle's International District with bilingual/bicultural staff and volunteers to assist customers with language barriers. The organization also translates written materials into multiple languages. ACRS Aging and Adult Services Director Gary Tang comments, "The majority of our staff are APA, so we are familiar with the food choices of our customers." He adds, "Some time ago, we saw customers tossing foods out of their bags as they left — cheese, packaged food." They talked to these customers, who often said, "It's heavy for me to carry, and I won't use it." This led to changes such as moving to a supermarket-like arrangement that allows for customer choice, as well as changes to the food offerings. Through these changes, people feel respected, and they get appropriate foods. "We do need to ask our customers what they want, how can we do better," says Tang. "Running human services, we tend to give ourselves an excuse not to push ourselves to do more — we just say resources are limited. We have to ask the hard questions! Customers do their homework, and will move to the food bank that best meets their needs."

**What it Takes:** Tang advises that finding volunteers who are representative of the communities served helps dramatically with cultural competency. At ACRS, they have relationships with 14 different ethnic associations who send volunteers to help with food sorting and home delivery. Volunteers who are from the same culture or speak the same language as customers can help with collecting information from customers, as well as understanding their community's needs and preferences.

## Reaching Out: Culturally Competent Groceries

Lifelong AIDS Alliance  
Seattle



Lifelong AIDS Alliance (LLA), as part of their practical support services to people with living with HIV/AIDS and other life-challenging illnesses, offers a grocery program for customers who are healthy enough to cook for themselves. Groceries can be tailored to suit customers' medical needs (such as a "soft" bag for people with chewing difficulties), limited cooking capacity (low- and no-cook bags), and ethnic dietary preferences. They recently began offering an East African Grocery Bag, and a Latino grocery bag is planned for the future. Nicole Sievers, RD, CD, Nutrition Services Supervisor, sees the East African bag as an important way to connect with East Africans, a hard-to-reach population who may be hesitant to sign up for AIDS-related services. In trying to figure out how best to reach them, they thought "since our meals are not currently appropriate, maybe we can do something with our groceries." They created the special bag by identifying a few key items that would appeal to East African immigrants. Working collaboratively with a local Ethiopian grocery store, they include injera (Ethiopian flatbread, a staple of the East African diet) and a few other ethnic specific ingredients. These few key items are supplemented with the usual fruits, vegetables and protein items. Just having a few ethnic-specific items seems to make a big difference. Slowly, via word of mouth, their East African customer base is growing.

**What it Takes:** An ability to identify community needs, relationships with individuals from the target group you wish to serve to help you identify appropriate foods, partnership with an ethnic grocery store or other source of culturally-specific foods.

## Customer Education

### It's How You Say It: Recipe Adaptation & Creation

Women's Resource Center of North Central Washington  
Wenatchee



Women's Resource Center of North Central Washington (WRC) got started offering recipes to food bank customers when "we noticed that the residents were cooking out of microwaves and that some couldn't get beyond tuna noodle casserole." They adapted recipes to work with food bank items, and changed wording to be more accessible: "sauté" became "lightly fry." Tanya Bradford, Special Programs Coordinator, notes that they create recipes especially for things they receive in large quantities, and try to focus on dishes that can be made using only ingredients from the food box they provide. For example, they received two months worth of canned salmon last year, and customers only knew one or two ways to serve it. So, WRC developed some additional recipes to show alternative preparations. They assume that customers have only basic equipment (stove, one pot, spoon) and ingredients (table salt, butter or margarine).

**What it Takes:** "You need people who know how to cook, and you need to try the recipes yourself," says Bradford. Think about the dishes you would make on your own, and make up adapted versions that are not complicated. WRC has a kitchen where it can test recipes, but volunteers could also test at home. Use simple vocabulary and keep measurements basic. Make sure that each recipe can serve at least four people, and don't expect your customers to all have the skills to double the recipe, help them with the math.

"When you can get public and private agencies to come to the table, that's when great things happen."

– Beverly Graham  
Founder & Executive Director  
Operation Sack Lunch

## Enhancing the Meal: DIY Seasoning Blends

Pantry Shelf  
Walla Walla



Pantry Shelf offers recipes to customers on a regular basis. “We want to encourage people to use whole foods, like items that are often in the USDA commodities to make meals and not to rely on prepackaged goods,” says Director Pat King. They focus on basic, nutritious products like oats, lentils, split peas, pinto or red beans. Offering spice packets or seasoning blends was a natural next step: “We realized people didn’t have all the spices available at home, or might not know how they tasted. With packet in hand, they knew they could make the recipe taste good. We have had a great response to the recipes and the spice packets.” Examples of popular packets are chili spices, meatloaf spices, and split pea soup. Pantry Shelf volunteers repack bulk spices by measuring and combining them into “snack-size” bags for a specific recipe. They do not use salt because they feel that most people have enough salt in their diets, and also because they want people on low-salt diets to be able to use the spice packets. Once the spice packets are made up and labeled, they are kept in a container in the refrigerator. When people come to the counter with recipes, volunteers offer the spice packets to match.

One area of emphasis is offering nutritious, low-salt and low-sugar recipes. If they have a new product that comes in like figs, they develop a recipe such as fig bars and offer samples to customers. This has generated a lot of interest in foods that otherwise might sit on the shelf. The Pantry Shelf also rotates recipes to match current stock, and offers seasonal recipes. For example, recipes for cake mix cookies are popular around the holidays, when people need to make things to send to school or bring to share at a party.

**What it Takes:** Volunteers willing to research — Pat recommends the internet and magazines — and be on the lookout for recipes that use the foods that you have, especially ones that may not be well known to customers, but offer high nutrition. Volunteers may also need to play around with the recipe, testing it and adapting it to fewer ingredients and dry spices you can put together for them. Spices in bulk is another requirement. Pat advises putting out the word that you want spice donations and you may be surprised at what comes in. Pantry Shelf received a large donation of spices from a business that was closing, and this really boosted their ability to offer a range of packets. To better serve their customers, Pantry Shelf has also translated some of their recipes into Spanish.





## Be Your Own Celebrity Chef: Cooking Demonstrations

Care & Share Food Bank  
Grand Coulee



When staff at the Grand Coulee Area Care & Share Food Bank (CSFB) realized that many of their younger customers didn't know how to cook, they decided to demonstrate how to cook commonly available items right on site during food bank hours. They advertised the demonstration to customers through flyers put in their food bags that listed upcoming events. The items cooked during the demonstration are included in customers' bags that day, along with recipes. Care & Share focuses on the basics. Director Fern Blaylock says, "I even cooked a pot of pinto beans—45 minutes, they couldn't believe it! I did it all on a hot plate." The rice demonstration included basics of how to cook rice along with the chance to taste four different rice recipes: plain rice, fried rice, stir fry and rice pudding. The demonstrations took hold right away. People brought their friends, and demos attracted up to 38 people. CSFB received fewer returns of the demonstrated items as a result.

**What it Takes:** Doing demos requires a kitchen facility, or at minimum a hot plate, recipes for food currently available at the food bank, one or more volunteer chefs, and plates and utensils to allow food sampling. A nice extra is to give out cooking utensils such as measuring spoons to customers who need them. Blaylock recommends letting people know in advance what you will be cooking, and making your kick-off event especially nice. The chefs should have food handler's permits. Check with your local health department if any other permits are necessary. This is a great chance for your volunteers to show off their cooking expertise and/or dramatic flair.

### Instant Oatmeal Mix

Reprinted from Taste of Home's "Light and Tasty" F/M 2003

Mix in large bowl:  
6 c. quick OR old-fashioned oats  
1 1/3 cup powdered milk  
1/4 cup brown sugar, packed  
1/4 c. sugar  
1 t. salt – optional  
1 tbl. cinnamon  
1 tsp. nutmeg

Store in large sealed bag and shake to mix each time before using.  
For one serving, mix 1/2 cup mix with 1/2 to 3/4 cup water (depending on how thick you like your oatmeal. Microwave about 3 min. – stop to stir after 11/2 min.

For old-fashioned oats, microwave an additional 11/2 min.  
Keep on hand raisins, dried cranberries, dates, fruit trail mix or other fruits to mix into oats before cooking, just 1 tbl. per serving.

Recipe discovery courtesy of the Pantry Shelf, Walla Walla.  
For more recipes geared to food bank use, contact Washington Food Coalition.

### Minute Minestrone

Makes 4 Servings

1/4 cup chopped onion  
1 medium zucchini OR cucumber, sliced  
2 Tbl margarine or butter  
2 cans beans: pinto, black, red – your choice  
2 cans broth OR tomato sauce/soup diluted with water  
1 can (16-oz.) whole tomatoes, undrained, cut up  
1 cup water (if using broth)  
1 cup pasta, uncooked

Seasonings

(Note: You can substitute dry beans, soaked, for canned beans)

1. In large saucepan, sauté onion and zucchini in margarine for 2 minutes
2. Add beans to saucepan and stir until heated through
3. Stir in remaining ingredients. Simmer for 15 minutes while stirring.

Recipe courtesy of the Women's Resource Center of North Central Washington.  
For more recipes geared to food bank use, contact Washington Food Coalition.



# Increasing Quantity, Quality and Variety

## Smart Shopping: Bulk Buying Committee

Seattle Food Committee

Seattle



For the past 20 plus years, the Seattle Food Committee (SFC) has pooled funds to purchase foods in bulk for Seattle food banks. Seattle's meal programs are also invited to participate with the committee to streamline ordering. The program is managed by an SFC committee supported by staff at Solid Ground's Food Resources. Food Lifeline (FLL) provides a staff person who attends the meetings and acts as a buying agent. All FEMA funds and some EFAP funds are put into a common pot and used to purchase high priority items which are then distributed to all eligible programs using an allocation formula. A special effort is made to maintain geographic diversity on the committee. Every year, SFC surveys members regarding their top three priority needs to help set the committee's priorities. Protein items, including meats and eggs; milk, fresh produce and rice generally top the list. The committee sets limits of it FEMA funding, up to 12%, to purchase non-food items such as paper and plastic bags for repacking food. The committee then looks at funding available for the year, and starts making buying decisions. After many years, they have agreement on certain regular purchases, such as purchasing eggs around Easter and peanut butter and/or tuna fish to carry families through the summer. The committee meets monthly, monitoring spending and making additional purchasing decisions while sticking to identified priorities. "This is a way of being good stewards of our funding, stretching it as far as we can," comments Trish Twomey. The only drawback she can find is that individual food banks can't tailor their purchases. "We try to choose foods that have broad appeal, such as vegetables used across many cultural groups," she notes.

Through this program, food banks are able to receive first rate product that is not dependent on the donation stream. The committee always purchases enough that each food bank has a sufficient supply of the item to last one week or two weeks for distribution. Once decisions are made, FLL staff researches options and consults with committee leadership to get final approval on a purchase. The food is delivered to FLL's warehouse and is distributed from there (bulk purchasing info for Seattle food banks is even incorporated into FLL's online ordering system).

**What it Takes:** If starting a program like this in your community, the place to start would be your local food distributor. Ask them if they have the capacity to do the pass-through, store and distribute the purchased food. Also, expect to assist in overhead to help cover some of the lead agency's costs. FEMA funds only allow 2% for administrative costs. Depending on capacity, choose appropriate purchases. For example, consider whether you can purchase perishables that require refrigeration. One place for a smaller community to start might be non-food items that all the programs need, such as plastic bags. Think about how you will organize yourselves and make decisions on behalf of the group.

## Cannery Project

Emergency Food Network

Pierce County



Through a partnership with the Church of Jesus Christ of the Later Day Saints (LDS), the Emergency Food Network is able to use an LDS canning facility two days per week to can food for Pierce County emergency food providers. EFN provides volunteers, all canning and labeling supplies and food for canning. LDS provides a supervisor and full access to their facilities and equipment. EFN cans corn, applesauce, carrots and many other foods in large quantities and distributes them to numerous emergency food programs. This is an unlikely partnership, but it happened thanks to the innovative vision of a local LDS leader.

**What it Takes:** Ability to build relationships, to identify potential partners beyond the usual suspects, and to think outside the box about how businesses or other partners in your community might be able to work with your organization. In this case, the capacity of a distribution center and willingness to take a chance on a new venture were critical success factors.

## Complimenting Donations: Purchasing Food

Northwest Harvest  
Seattle



Purchasing food to supplement donated food has always been a practice of Northwest Harvest (NWH). “There is a limit to what is available through donations, especially when it comes to protein — it just isn’t available. Our goal with purchasing is to offer a more varied menu and more nutritional items,” says Steve Bauck, Director, Hunger Response Network. Protein, rice, dried beans, pasta and tomato sauce are among the top items that NWH purchases for distribution. In order to decide what to purchase, NWH gets formal and informal input from member programs in a variety of ways. They hold regional meetings around the state in addition to their large annual meeting. In addition, they have a series of questions that they ask programs on the bottom of their monthly statistics form, including what trends they have observed, challenges and successes, and feedback on the product received from NWH. As a result, says Bauck, “We hear what people are short on.” After assessing the needs, NWH begins the process of projecting donations for the coming year. Past information on donations broken down by nutritional category is used as a basis for creating a “shopping list.” Purchasing is also influenced by where they can get good deals on large quantity purchases.

**What it Takes:** Of course, funds are the most critical factor to permit purchasing food. However, savvy buying depends on experience in food purchasing. NWH maintains contacts throughout the country and a lot of experience, which allows them to get excellent prices and the maximum benefit for their dollars.

## Food Drives: You’re in the Driver’s Seat

Hood Canal Food Bank  
Hoodsport



Hood Canal Food Bank (HCFB) targets specific items that are missing from their shelves, and gives out a list of these items to drive organizers such as churches and schools. “We need these extra items to fill our menu, so we started approaching people, and now they come to us for a list when they’re ready to do something,” says Marlene Boutwell, Executive Director. They ask for things they can’t get through the donation stream or discounted, such as large, hearty soups, Hamburger Helper® and chili. Boutwell notes the importance of selecting items that match your customers’ needs, whether ethnic or other dietary preferences. The drives give community members a chance to connect with the community via the food bank.

**What it Takes:** Many food banks have reported success with food-specific drives. Asking for specific items is educational for donors and makes them feel that their donation will make a difference. The only requirement is having a person familiar with current and anticipated stock make up a list to share with drive organizers of what is needed at that time.

“We need these extra items to fill our menu, so we started approaching people, and now they come to us for a list when they’re ready to do something,”

– Marlene Boutwell, Executive Director  
Hood Canal Food Bank

## Hooked: Fishing for Success

Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Food Bank Distribution Center  
Hoquiam



In 1990, Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Food Bank Distribution Center (GHPCFBDC) made a request to the Washington State Department of Fisheries to begin receiving and processing salmon from state fish hatcheries. GHPCFBDC worked with local certified processors to prepare the fish for distribution. After years of processing fish for local use, GHPCFBDC was approached by the State to help spread more salmon statewide. This led them to partner with a larger processor in Bellingham, with GHPCFBDC taking responsibility for transportation-related aspects of the project — dispatching, hiring and firing drivers, loading and unloading to get the fish to the processor and back into the distribution channels. Now, GHPCFBDC also partners with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service for additional donations. The model GHPCFBDC developed for accepting and processing donated fish has now been replicated in Oregon, California and Michigan. The program is a big improvement over the hodgepodge of local agreements between hatcheries and food banks, because individual food banks may not have the facilities to process the fish and ensure high food safety standards. Professional, centralized processing ensures safety and reduces liability for all partners.

GHPCFBDC's entrepreneurial spirit is obvious when you talk with Jim Coates, Executive Director. Coates saw an opportunity for social enterprise in conjunction with the fish donation program. The fish needed to be iced for transport, and ice was costly to the processor at \$36 per ton. GHPCFBDC worked out a deal to make ice with their own machine to supply the program, and can also sell ice on the side to other businesses to generate income. Coates comments, "If you are going to be in this business, you have to be outside the norm. You have to create your own products, otherwise you are at the mercy of others. The only reason I went for fish is that protein is lacking in the donation stream. Look around your area to see what is available. What does your area grow or have that might be of use to you or others?"

**What it Takes:** Since the GHPCFBDC program distributes salmon statewide, there is no need for other Washington agencies to replicate the program. However, the potential is there to create new programs to make other products available. Creativity, vision and persistence in working out win-win collaborative arrangements with public and private entities drive this type of innovation. Political connections and clout can be helpful as well in gaining public support for large scale projects. For example, Jim Coates had connections in the Governor's office when the salmon program was started.



# Customer Service

Treating customers with dignity is a key best practice for emergency food providers. In speaking with food banks and meal programs around the state, many expressed the importance of having a strong customer service orientation and “good attitude,” and some talked about how their faith or values guide the way they do business. Many agencies have taken customer service beyond the basics as well, stretching themselves to make their services more accessible and convenient, more personalized, and more culturally competent. Others are going beyond food to provide other needed services. General best practices in the area of customer service are:

- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers treat customers with respect
- Maximizing customer choice through a shopping or self-select format or other mechanisms
- Listening to customer input and adapting services and food available to meet the specific needs of your customer base
- Recruiting volunteers from key demographic groups so that your volunteer base is reflective of the customers served
- Having good signage and clear guidelines for clients, available in multiple languages if needed
- Establishing hours of operations based on customer rather than volunteer convenience, such as weekend and evening hours for working individuals and families

The customer service profiles below are divided into the following categories: meeting customers where they are, increasing access and convenience, hospitality, beyond food, going the extra mile for kids, and more good ideas.

## Meeting Customers Where They Are

### Door to Door: Delivery Service

St. Mary's Food Bank  
Seattle



St. Mary's Food Bank (SMFB) offers a home delivery service for customers who are homebound. “We noticed with our walk-in customers coming in that some elderly and disabled people were struggling. Sometimes we would get a call from a case worker who knew someone who needed food,” says Sue Smith, Food Bank Director. SMFB delivers to several hundred people each week, which Smith says is the “tip of the iceberg” in relation to need. The program is made possible by volunteers who agree to cover a route with a number of deliveries once a week, using their own cars to deliver the food. SMFB does background checks and sets the bar high regarding whom they send out, since customers are vulnerable and alone. The service is intended for people who cannot leave their homes without assistance. Customers self-identify as needing the service, and given the demand, they are always asked whether there is someone in their lives who they can send to pick up their food. Once registered, customers are added to a delivery route.

SMFB has route sheets that they print every week. The volunteers see the same 10-12 people each week, so they get acquainted. In many cases, several customers are clustered in one building. They rely on volunteer drivers to assist with adjusting the contents of food bags to meet the special dietary needs of their customers — these restrictions are notated on the route sheet. SMFB delivers only once a week, so they bring a lot of groceries since they know customers can't get out. How long the route takes depends in part on how chatty the volunteers are, but usually 45 minutes to two hours. They need to balance visiting with the need to get perishable food out to folks, and may also vary the length of their visits depending on how isolated the customer is.

**What it Takes:** “This program is hard. You really need to have your ducks in a row because these people need their food every week. If you can't do that, don't start it.” says Smith. Be prepared to screen and manage volunteers, and have a “Plan B” for when a volunteer is sick or on vacation. She also notes that people are needed to pack bags, handle logistics, and make volunteers feel appreciated. At SMFB, some people share routes, alternating weekly or monthly. In some cases, children ride along with their parents, seniors appreciate the children's visits. It is very important to establish geographic parameters and limits on the number of customers served, although it can be difficult to say no to people in need. SMFB has benefited from a volunteer who created a customized Access database system for them. However, route assignments are determined by staff, and could be done using a simpler tracking system if needed.

## Linkages: Pairing Fresh Meals with Groceries

Lifelong AIDS Alliance and Greenwood Food Bank  
Seattle



Lifelong AIDS Alliance (LAA)'s food program, Chicken Soup Brigade, works to improve the nutritional health of people living with HIV/AIDS and other life-challenging illnesses. When they expanded their mission to include seniors, LLA teamed up with Seattle's Greenwood Food Bank (GFB), operated by Volunteers of American Western Washington, to deliver meals to homebound seniors in GFB's service area. LLA delivers packaged, frozen meals once a week to GFB. GFB then delivers the meals along with groceries to qualified customers (currently, about 10-15 people) at their homes. GFB helps identify people in need of meals, and also takes responsibility for completing intake paperwork for LLA and documenting the customers' nutritional needs. LLA cooks and packs quality meals and brings them to GFB weekly for distribution. This partnership works well for both organizations: LLA is able to send meals to seniors, and GFB is able to provide both groceries and meals (double the nutrition!) to their elderly, homebound customers. Mike Cox, Grocery/Delivery Coordinator of LLA comments, "It has been a benefit for us to show collaboration to our funders, a feather in both of our caps." LLA already had a satellite system for meal delivery, so this partnership was a natural extension.

**What it Takes:** Cox found it easy to establish this partnership — since he is active with the Seattle Food Committee, he already knew many food bank coordinators around the city. A formal memorandum of understanding between partners outlining roles and responsibilities is recommended.

"We believe that by giving food we would eat ourselves — nutritious and varied — we are helping our neighbors in need."

— WFC Emergency Food Provider Survey respondent





## On the Road: Mobile Food Bank

St. Leo's Food Connection  
Tacoma & Lakewood



St. Leo's Food Connection (SLFC) is expanding access through a mobile food bank. The mobile food bank started after the Lakewood Collaborative Hunger Task Force, a group of city officials, civic leaders and social service providers, identified three neighborhoods in Lakewood which were extremely low-income, and had significant transportation challenges and were without grocery stores. SLFC stepped up to serve one of the neighborhoods, Springbrook. "Because we already had a truck and we package food, this was a natural fit for us," commented Director Kevin Glackin-Coley. "The Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma, where we are based, is gentrifying, so our customers are moving outside the center city. Now we have to go to them." St. Leo's Food Connection packages the food at their office, stores it temporarily at the Emergency Food Network, and transports it on Saturday to four different locations serving 125-150 households each week. SLFC divided the neighborhood into quadrants and picked four main intersections as mobile food bank sites, so customers wouldn't have to walk too far. Their truck, loaded with bags of food, pulls up to each corner at an appointed time and distributes food bags from out of the rear of the truck. They have made small changes to the schedule and procedures over time. "If we waited until we knew how to do it, we probably still wouldn't be doing it," says Glackin-Coley. "There are hungry people who aren't being served by the system as it currently exists. We are trying to think outside the box to reach them." They know the program is making a difference because they've heard from a local elementary school teacher who says she noticed a big difference for some of her students, who were no longer coming to school famished on Monday mornings.

**What it Takes:** A truck, good data about where emergency food is needed, partners (St. Leo's Food Connection works with Centro Latino volunteers for translation), flexibility of volunteers and staff.

### Defining Service with Dignity

Many food banks share a commitment to service with dignity. What do we really mean by that? Below are some "ingredients" to move us toward a shared definition, generated by participants in a conference session at the 2007 Food Lifeline Agency Conference.

- Removal of barriers
- Increased customer/customer choice
- Personalization
- Understanding
- Generous spirit
- Commitment to customer service
- Consideration and respect
- Valuing customers' time
- Respect for privacy

**Oregon Food Bank has taken the concept of a shared definition further and developed the following statement of "Customer Rights and Responsibilities" which is posted in all their member food banks.**

#### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We recognize the basic rights of individuals who seek food assistance. Concern for personal dignity is of great importance. At the same time, staff and volunteers expect responsible behavior from you.

#### You can expect from us:

- Respect, Consideration, Cooperation, Patience
- Access to Services for which you are eligible
- Personal information kept Confidential
- Opportunity to participate in Surveys & Evaluations
- A Safe Environment

#### Our expectations of you:

- Respect, Consideration, Cooperation, Patience
- Accurate Information to establish eligibility for services
- A Safe Environment



## Making it Easy: Satellite Food Banks

Thurston County Food Bank  
Olympia



Thurston County Food Bank (TCFB) was motivated to establish satellite food banks in order to increase access. All the satellite programs they have established depend on partnerships with a hosting agency, and have been developed strategically to reduce known barriers to access. They have established 10 satellites so far, targeted to serve low-income families, seniors and geographically isolated communities. TCFB began its satellite program at two housing complexes with a high percentage of low-income families, working with the on-site after-school programs. This allows working parents to pick up food once a month when they pick up their kids. Before, many of these parents had trouble making it to TCFB's downtown location during the workday. The next step was serving the frail elderly who have trouble traveling downtown and carrying their groceries home. By bringing food to two senior centers, the seniors have a comfortable place to wait for the food and for a "Dial a Lift" ride home afterward. Other goals of the satellites have been to extend hours of operation, providing evening and weekend food bank hours, and bringing food into geographically isolated communities.

TCFB offers satellites in partnership with host agencies that provide volunteers, a site, and reporting of program statistics. TCFB delivers food and offers technical assistance to get the satellite up and running. Partners benefit because they don't have to do food drives or package up bags of food. Basic bagged food is provided, and TCFB is glad to add on produce, bread or other items if the site has the capacity to receive, store and distribute the food. Customers are also still welcome to visit the downtown location to access a greater variety of foods.

**What it Takes:** Operating satellites requires selecting and recruiting appropriate partners. TCFB requires their satellites to be credible, able to track and report statistics, able to meet a high standard for volunteer screening, and to carry their own liability insurance. You must also have the ability to distribute food. Executive Director Robert Coit advises, "Don't roll out too fast! You will be successful, and you will need more food and resources to support the satellites. Be sure you can accommodate an increase in your customer base." Be strategic in your planning, and remember that your success hinges on the reputation of the host agencies. Think about your own capacity, and how to handle the logistics on your end. TCFB went "old school" with prepared grocery bags because they have the volunteer capacity to prep the bags, and can even pack them a few days ahead when there is a slow day. Finally, develop a clear, written memorandum of understanding between the two agencies. TCFB always requires such an agreement, and has developed written policies for the satellite program as well.

## Increasing Access and Convenience

### Eliminating the Line: Appointments

Hopelink  
Redmond



Hopelink assigns its food bank customers specific appointment times to reduce customer wait time. This gives customers a specific time to aim for so they spend less time waiting for service, and it alleviates parking problems as well. Appointments are scheduled at 15 minute intervals, and the number given out is based on their calculation of how many families they can serve in each fifteen minute period. They have a lottery style system so people aren't always stuck with the last appointment and the system is perceived as fair. Each week when a customer visits, either they or a staff members draw a slip of paper for them that lists the food bank location, appointment date and time for the following week. The customer holds onto the slip, which serves as proof that they have an appointment. People without appointments and new customers can come through during the last fifteen minutes of open hours. "It works for us," comments Rus Sudakov, Food Bank Coordinator, Northshore Hopelink. "It takes the strain off of the customers. No matter what you say about having enough for everyone, people still have the mentality that they need to get in first. This makes it workable." He observes that this system is inherently less flexible, and Hopelink has developed guidelines for specific exceptions. Each food bank adopting an appointment system might have different exceptions depending on the community served.

**What it Takes:** First, decide to make a change and explain the upcoming change to customers (better yet—ask them if they feel appointments would be beneficial). Set up a template for printing slips (Hopelink uses a Microsoft Word label template to create slips each week with the correct date). Think through what your policies will be for people who lose their slips and under what circumstances you might make exceptions to the system. Train volunteers regarding the change and the rationale.

## What's Cookin': Resource Hotline

Anti-Hunger Coalition  
Whatcom County



Everyday, Tutu Iverson, Board Vice President of Bellingham Community Meal (BCM), updates a Community Voice Mail (CVM) box message with information about which food banks are open and where to find free meals that day as part of her work with Whatcom County's Anti-Hunger Coalition. Food banks and meal programs send updates on their open hours, and she also reaches out to them to make sure the information she puts out is accurate. The coalition advertises their resource line via a card and inclusion in a resource guide. Social service providers have been especially appreciative of having a number to give clients.

**What it Takes:** Iverson says maintaining the voicemail is “not a lot of work, but you have to keep it up all the time.” She has even called in while out of town to do daily updates of the information. At this point, her basic script is memorized. Interns or student volunteers could also be involved in updating the messages, or it could be done in various languages if volunteer interpreters are available. Of course, the most basic requirement is to set up a voicemail box. These are available from the phone company, or free of charge through your local Community Voice Mail provider or from several online services. To hear today's message, dial 360-788-7EAT.

## Big Wheels: Grocery Carts

Kettle Falls Community Chest Food Bank  
Kettle Falls



When the local grocery store upgraded their shopping carts, one of the Kettle Falls Community Chest Food Bank board members saw an opportunity. The store was selling the old carts for \$10 each, and even agreed to donate some to the food bank. They took four carts, and all are heavily used both within the food bank to move stock, and by customers to transport food home. “We have about 30 food bank customers living right in town, and many don't have cars. We tell them that if they need to walk home, take a cart and bring it back at their convenience later that day or the next day,” says Susan Urhausen, Director. In addition, the carts are used to bring food out to customers' cars. This frees up volunteers since many older or disabled customers can manage with the cart, but would need assistance without it. The loaning of carts is casual, and so far they haven't had any problems with people not returning them.

**What it Takes:** Solicit a donation or purchase used carts from a grocery store. Consider how many you really need so that you don't run into storage problems.



## In Sync: Meeting Unmet Need

Lakewood Food Banks  
Resource Distribution Council  
St. Leo's Food Connection  
Lakewood



In June 2005, Lakewood's largest food bank – First Baptist – which served approximately 40% of Lakewood's food bank clients unexpectedly closed its doors. This action immediately created a critical situation for those in need of emergency food in the Lakewood area. A meeting was held that included representatives from the remaining food banks, EFN and the Resource Distribution Council (RDC) to discuss the situation and begin development of a plan to meet the crisis. In the meeting it became apparent that the remaining Lakewood food banks did not have adequate storage space, staff or volunteers to meet the crisis alone. The RDC agreed to immediately begin serving Lakewood clients at its Tacoma location and to work to open a food bank site in Lakewood. The RDC staff put a plan into action and opened a food bank site near the old food bank within months of the closure.

Then in early 2006, the Lakewood Community Collaboration — a group of human service providers and city officials, city council members — identified wide spread hunger as a critical issue facing the community. As a result, it formed the Lakewood Collaborative Hunger Task Force to analyze the situation and to develop recommendations for ways to address this need. The Task Force identified three neighborhoods — Springbrook, Woodbrook, and Tillicum — as most in need of increased emergency food support because of existing barriers such as poverty, lack of grocery stores, and transportation difficulties. In response Tacoma's St. Leo's Food Connection food bank began a weekly mobile food bank to the Springbrook neighborhood on Saturdays (see separate profile) and RDC began a weekly mobile food bank to Woodbrook on Wednesdays.

Through the community meeting and the Lakewood Collaborative Hunger Task Force, Lakewood food providers created a more comprehensive schedule for food banks in Lakewood. The days per week that Lakewood residents can access emergency food increased from four to six, including a Saturday time when there was previously no weekend availability. There have been numerous other benefits of the collaborations, including increased awareness of additional resources available to their customers, knowing how to help each other and share extra food, joint advocacy and exploration of cooperative buying.

**What it Takes:** Commitment of community leaders and food banks to come together and meet (often sparked in response to a crisis, as in this case), ability to see the customer perspective, identify problems and think outside the box to craft collaborative solutions.

## No Questions Asked: Self-Serve Food

Helpline House  
Bainbridge Island



Bainbridge Island's Helpline House (HH) offers a variety of community services, including a food bank, a clothing bank, a medical equipment loan program, and counseling. One reception lobby serves all the programs, and HH has installed bread racks, a display freezer and refrigerator in the lobby area. This allows all customers — even those visiting another program — to access food, and there is no limit on the number of visits. The refrigerator features fresh produce donations from the grocery store and their community garden. Marilyn Gremse, Volunteer Manager, comments, "We have produce that comes in and we need to move it right away. This way, it's on view, people see it, and they take it." They also use the front fridge and freezer for bulk things, like specialty flavors of ice cream, that people wouldn't think to ask for. Having this accessible food helps serve people with dignity, and they are finding that even people reluctant to use a food bank may come and access the front area. Check-in is needed to access the food bank.

**What it Takes:** Space in the waiting area, display refrigeration and/or freezer. HH's lobby is monitored by a volunteer at the check-in desk.

# Hospitality

## Redefining the Food Bank: Adding Services

My Sister's Pantry  
Tacoma



My Sister's Pantry (MSP) serves up a hot meal and provides groceries and clothing to low-income community members three times a month, working out of First Congregational Church in Tacoma until their new home at First Methodist is complete. They serve on average 250-300 families per month representing 1,000-1,500 individuals. The vision to provide a quality meal experience came from their founder, a woman who had been in need of the food bank at one time in her life, and felt there was no dignity for the people in line. Instead, she wanted the MSP experience to be like going to a friend's house for dinner. On entry, people can receive a number for service at the food bank and/or clothing bank. Then, they receive a meal. All services are provided during a two hour period.

The meal is served on dishes, with silverware and tablecloths on the tables. People eat family style at large tables. About half of the people served are Eastern European, and many families dine together. The food is generally cooked by professional chefs who donate their time. "A local restaurant owner comes with his family and co-workers," says Martha Curwen, Executive Director. "We jokingly call it Iron Chef Pantry — they don't know what they are cooking in advance, but come in on Monday afternoons and prepare everything (using donated and purchased food). Because of his commitment, I have had other cooks approach me, and they either handle Saturdays or substitute as needed on Mondays." The experience is almost like dining at a restaurant — without the bill. Diners often take an interest in the meal and ask for recipes, so it shows them what they can do with the food from the food bank. MSP makes an effort to offer things that can easily be made with food bank items, for example, a salsa made with canned corn, black beans, diced tomatoes, and onions, served at a sample table with chips.

The food bank asks customers to fill out a grocery list indicating items they would like to take home — the list is printed with English and Russian side by side. These lists are used by a corps of volunteers who bag up food while people are eating, in the order indicated by their assigned number. Customers can also visit a produce and bread station while they are there. Clothing bank customers enter a designated area, arranged like a clothing store, and have 10 minutes to choose 10 items.

**What it Takes:** Curwen stresses that MSP has chosen their hours to accommodate the individuals and families served — evenings and weekends. She recommends assessing the customers' needs and planning around this. The operation is very volunteer intensive, utilizing 40-50 volunteers each time they are open. She draws heavily on church groups, college and high school students. Naturally, a facility with a kitchen, dining space, and room to accommodate the food bank and any other activities is needed as well.

## Taking Hospitality to a New Level: Offering Take-Out

Women's & Children's Free Restaurant  
Spokane



By its very name, the Women's & Children's Free Restaurant (WCFR) strives to set itself apart from a standard soup kitchen. While they did serve soup in their early years beginning in 1988, they have always placed an equal importance on hospitality. WCFR provides two made-from-scratch dinners each week in the basement of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Since 2000, WCFR has been led by Executive Director Marlene Alford, a former caterer. In March 2004, to better meet the needs of families and provide something for the weekend when they were closed, they added Friday Take-Out. While Alford and her Board first thought they were just going to do another entrée, Friday Take-Out has become much more. In addition to offering an entrée to serve at least two, WCFR sets up a small "farmers market" with produce, bread, and a limited selection of dairy items — and serves lunch beginning at 12:30 p.m. A crew of volunteers spends Friday morning getting ready to open their "market" at 1 p.m. Before opening they make up the day's shopping list to distribute to their diners. "We would never choose for them," says Alford. Upon entering the program on Friday afternoons, the women are handed the shopping list of available items for their review and selection. WCFR staff and volunteers work to think of everything, including portioning salad dressings from commercial size jars or washing and cutting whole watermelon to ensure that there's enough to go around and that diners can carry it home. They've also been adding recipes and continue to build their nutrition education resources.

**What it Takes:** Alford's food service industry experience has been valuable in launching the take-out service. To offer meals to go, you'll need to pursue a Class II Complex license from the health department. After that Alford acknowledges that you'll need a "huge amount of creativeness," food service knowledge, and the ability to be flexible, recognizing the ever-changing donation stream.

# Beyond Food

## Addressing Root Causes: Home Healthcare Assistance

Jubilee Ministry  
Prosser



Jubilee Ministry (JM) is a multi-faith effort supported by seven area churches, Kiwanis Club and the Knights of Columbus. JM has been innovative in beginning to respond to other community needs beyond hunger. Two years ago, a gap in home healthcare coverage for seniors in their community was brought to JM leaders by Prosser Memorial Hospital. When seniors leave the hospital and their Medicare coverage for home health care runs out, JM provides money for home health aides, in an effort to keep them out of the hospital. JM is able to provide support for about 10 people at a time. The hospital needed start-up money, so JM put it in their budget. The food bank also tries to get volunteers to help patients at home after the coverage ends, assisting with filling prescriptions, transportation to doctors appointments and so forth. These relationships have worked well in a few cases so far. JM also has a scholarship program, awarding two \$1,000 scholarships each year to local kids going to college. Both programs are funded from the food bank's general operating budget.

**What it Takes:** Because JM has strong support from community partners, individual donors and revenues from a thrift shop, they had the means to support additional programs. They have allocated \$10,000 to home healthcare this year. With regard to the decision about which services to support, Sydney Boggs, Director observes, "It really depends on the area and what the needs are. It's important that you know exactly what the needs of the community are."

## The Doctor's In: On-site Health Clinic

North Helpline  
Seattle



North Helpline (NH) started as a call-in/drop-in resource center. They started the Lake City Food Bank in 2001, precipitated by a crisis when a food bank in a neighboring community outside the city limits said it would no longer be able to serve Seattle residents (North Helpline was referring its customers there). Now, Lake City Food Bank serves 1,000 people per week. Many food bank customers present with medical needs, and NH knew that most were using the emergency room at nearby Northwest Hospital & Medical Center as their primary care provider. NH had been working with Rotary and learned about RotaCare Clinics. They worked hard to bring the program to Lake City, partnering with Rotary and the hospital as a source of volunteer medical personnel and back-up for urgent care. NH now has a clinic on-site that is open Saturdays, with two exams rooms, a triage area and a pharmacy. A mobile dental van also visits monthly. The hospital is supportive because without the clinic present, they would see many of these patients in their emergency room at an increased cost. Bartell Drugs provides prescription drugs at cost to NH, who passes them on free of charge to patients. Executive Director Rita Anderson comments, "It's cheap insurance to support our programs. No one knows when they may need assistance."

**What it Takes:** Anderson advises making the connections and doing the legwork beforehand. Make sure you have partners, because it takes a lot of money and effort to operate a clinic. NH fundraises for the project, has received equipment donations, and engaged skilled medical volunteers. The clinic has been a welcome addition to the community.



# Going the Extra Mile for Kids

## Bringing it Home: Backpack Meals

Des Moines Area Food Bank  
Des Moines



The Des Moines Area Food Bank (DMAFB) started their Backpack Project to meet the needs of low-income children and their families. Children qualified for the free and reduced price school meals and identified by the school administrators as at risk of weekend hunger are provided with backpacks of food to take home each Friday. DMAFB started the program when they realized that 60% of area children qualified for free and reduced lunch, and that the income guidelines for that program are the same as the guidelines for receiving USDA commodities. They began a partnership with SeaTac Elementary and have now expanded to serve a second local school as well, distributing over 150 backpacks each week. Kids take home full backpacks from school on Friday and return them on Monday — or, being kids, Tuesday. DMAFB volunteers pickup the backpacks from the school, refill them and deliver them back to the school by Friday. Two days worth of foods geared to kids is provided, for example, instant oatmeal or a breakfast bar with fruit for breakfast, microwavable macaroni and cheese or chili with chips, a cookie and juice for lunch and dinner, plus one or two snack items per day. They pay attention to nutritional density as much as possible. In order to offer appropriate foods, DMAFB does purchase some items, primarily single serve main meals, juice and fruit.

**What it Takes:** Backpacks, preferably ones that won't make the kids noticeable (DMAFB received a donation of a large number of backpacks from Washington Mutual), people to sort food and fill backpacks with appropriate food items, funds to purchase some items that are needed that may not be available regularly through the donation stream.

## More than a Meal: Recognizing Other Needs

Sky Valley Food Bank  
Monroe



Sky Valley Food Bank (SVFB) has expanded their services to include back-to-school supplies for kids as well as toys during the holiday season. They conduct a community drive that brings in donations and also increases their community visibility, stressing that supplies will go to the community's neediest children. Their goal is to provide the school supplies prior to school starting, so the children are able to fit in and be confident like the other children that have more resources on the first day of school. Supplies collected match school requirements, and are organized at the food bank by grade level. When asked why SVFB started the program, Julie Morris, Executive Director, says, "If the parents can't even afford food, how can they get them through school? Items are expensive! If they are in need of food, they're also probably really worried, concerned and stressed about school supplies and toys for Christmas. Those are the two programs we chose to add for our families in need, and they are both feel-good programs for the community as well." She adds, "The additional programs make your food bank look extensive. It can seem cumbersome when added to everything else, but it's such a great public relations tool as well as making a difference in the lives of people."

**What it Takes:** One or more volunteers will need to organize supplies by grade, and designated gifts will need to be tracked for the program. The drive is run by soliciting community partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Fire Department, Rotary Club and local businesses. Cash donations are used to buy backpacks or fill gaps in supplies. Before getting started, make sure your staff, board and volunteers support the effort.

"The additional programs make your food bank look extensive. It can seem cumbersome when added to everything else, but it's such a great public relations tool as well as making a difference in the lives of people."

— Julie Morris, Executive Director  
Sky Valley Food Bank



## It's in the Bag! Making Celebrations Possible

Maltby Food Bank  
Maltby



Knowing that children's birthdays can be expensive for parents, Maltby Food Bank (MFB) decided to start offering child's birthday bags to families. A typical bag contains cake mix, frosting, birthday candles, disposable plates and napkins, and party favors. Gender appropriate bags are available for boys and girls. Donations of party goods are solicited from community groups. So far, Scouts, 4-H clubs, bible study groups and schools have assembled and donated bags. MFB is currently well-stocked as the local Montessori school recently donated 60 bags. The bags have been a big hit with customers, who indicate that they may have been unable to throw a party without the assistance. Fran Walster, Director, indicates that she started the program primarily because "I needed an idea to get the community to help us. People want to help, they just don't know how. Once you tell them how to give, they're willing." She also has groups that assemble and donate gift bags for seniors with toiletries and gift cards.

**What it Takes:** This is an excellent community service project for a service club, scout troop or other outside group looking to make a specific contribution to your food bank. MFB publicizes the need, offers basic guidelines, and donors do the rest.

## Beyond the Box: Summer Meal Program

Copalis Community Church Food Bank  
Copalis Beach



Five years ago, Copalis Community Church Food Bank (CCCFB) saw the need for a summer free lunch program in their community. They applied to USDA to become a sponsor for the Summer Feeding Program. After operating at a single site in the first year, the program has expanded each year and now serves over 4,500 lunches each summer all over the north beach community. Meals are served at nine sites, including the school district's summer reading program, parks and recreation programs, and central community locations. Recently, the program was expanded to include three mobile sites at places where low-income children are concentrated. "The mobile program is our shining star," comments former Board Co-Chairman Phyllis Shaughnessy. "We look for pockets of kids, like a modular home park, set out portable picnic tables and serve lunch. We've even incorporated a reading program where we take books and give them to the kids." Shaughnessy reports that a faithful group of volunteers keep the program running. She also notes that it makes sense to have a food bank involved in this program, since they can use food from the food bank to lower the cost of making the lunches. Food banks considering running a similar program are invited to visit Copalis to see this operation in action. "It is something to behold. We deliver to four to six sites each day, and it goes like machine work."

**What it Takes:** Startup funding to cover the costs of food until USDA reimbursement is received (CCCFB gets theirs from individuals and the county), volunteers to prepare and deliver sack lunches, a kitchen space for food preparation (they use their church kitchen), and a strong organizer to get out in public and encourage interest.

## Beyond the Box, Take 2: Summer Lunch Camp

South Kitsap Helpline  
Port Orchard



The South Kitsap Helpline (SKH)'s Summer Lunch Camp began in the summer of 2006 as an alternative to USDA's Summer Feeding Program. This free, drop-in lunch program is designed to assist low-income families in the community in need of additional help feeding their children in the summer when free and reduced price meals are not offered because school is not in session. Children from pre-school to age 18 are invited to attend and receive a nutritious lunch and snack three days per week. If children are unable to stay, they pack lunches for them to take home. Extra food is also sent home with the children on Fridays for weekend meals. Parents are invited to stay with the children, or take a two-hour break for themselves. In addition to receiving food, children socialize, participate in an arts and craft project, read books, play games and receive one-on-one attention from staff and volunteers. SKH worked to create a summer camp atmosphere with "lunch camp counselors" who take kids' orders. During the first year, the Summer Lunch Camp operated all summer long on a budget of just \$3,000.

**What it Takes:** Reliable group of staff and volunteers, building space during lunchtime hours, and lunches. SKH was able to partner with the First Lutheran Church who provided space in their centrally located church, which also had an appropriate kitchen space for meal preparation. When the program started, SKH did significant community outreach through the local schools, their food bank, posters at local community centers, laundromats and other community gathering places, and press releases to the local newspapers. They created parental consent/emergency contact forms, medical treatment and liability release forms and basic rules for parents and children, modeled on other summer camp programs.

# Listening to Customers

## Survey Says: Customer Interviews

Walla Walla Salvation Army  
Walla Walla



Walla Walla Salvation Army (WWSA) appreciates the importance of hearing from customers regularly in order to provide the best possible service. They conduct client surveys twice a year through one-on-one interviews. Questions they ask include: How long does the food you receive last? Are you on food stamps? What other foods would you like to receive? What isn't useful? How would you rate the atmosphere at our food bank? The answers are used to figure out if WWSA is meeting the needs of their customers and how they can improve. Social Services Director JoAnne Reinikka comments, "We conduct interviews because we get more of a response from interviewees, and the interaction allows for clarification." If they prefer, customers can fill out the survey themselves. The survey is conducted on a single day, and they typically get about 25 responses each time. They use a visual scale with happy and sad faces, and provide interpreters to non-English speakers. Feedback is reviewed at a special staff and board meeting, and indicated changes are implemented. "Treating people with respect — that's primary, that's the goal. Knowing your client base, serving your client base — that's what it's about," says Reinikka.

**What it Takes:** Personable volunteers are needed to conduct the survey, and it will take time to develop a survey with well-worded questions that get at the information you need. Start with a short survey with five or six key questions. To show customers you are serious about respecting their opinions, make some level of change based on their input, and let them know it made a difference in how you run the food bank. This kind of input can be used to make incremental changes, and it is also great to collect information to inform a larger strategic planning process.

## Translating Hunger: Meeting Community Needs

Hopelink  
Redmond



In 2006, a team of volunteers from Leadership Eastside (LE) worked with Hopelink to conduct a series of focus groups with food bank customers, particularly non-English speaking immigrants. The research objective was to provide Hopelink with detailed information about the staple foods their ethnically diverse client base would most benefit from receiving. LE organized five language-specific focus groups and two English language focus groups, scheduled at food bank locations. Outreach to customers to invite participation was done via phone calls by volunteer interpreters, and participants were given a \$20 gift card in appreciation of their input. The cultural/language groups covered were Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Eastern European, and Spanish-speaking. The following are selected comments from the report's executive summary:

- Food bank clients know what good foods are and would like to have the resources to eat well every day. But good food is expensive and then need what little money they have for nonnegotiable expenses like rent.
- It's not about quick and easy, but about making good, healthy food (soups, breads, meals) from scratch—they need ingredients, not convenience foods. This is not so much about maintaining and passing on traditions as it is about focusing on healthy food.
- Often "lunch" is the main meal of the day and even kids who go to school prefer to come home to eat this meal (after school) rather than eat the free or reduced price lunch at school.
- Clients would like to be able to get more of the following items from the food bank: fresh or frozen meat, poultry and fish; fresh vegetables; dairy products, especially milk and cheese; fresh fruits; rice; flour; dried beans; tortillas; cooking oil; and sugar.
- The following items are less desirable: stale, moldy or expired dairy products, meat and bread; canned, boxed or processed foods. Acceptance of packaged foods could be increased if there was a way to get the labels translated into appropriate languages. Some of the reluctance is because the clients don't know exactly what is in the can or box, or how to prepare it.

"The research has helped us to adjust some of our produce ordering for the populations we serve. For example, at our evening food banks in Redmond, we have a high number of Hispanics. In preparation for those nights, we stock jalapenos and other desired foods when our budget and availability permits," says Scott Milne, Food Program Manager/Redmond Center Manager. "We also use this information when conducting food drives and purchasing other perishable and non-perishable food items."

**What it Takes:** If your organization is interested in conducting market research with customers, you should seek out a person with relevant expertise to help you design an effective inquiry process. You may find that for-profit businesses in your community are willing to share their expertise in this area. Consider what incentives you can offer participants, and how to make them feel appreciated for their contribution to your learning. Also, make sure your organization's leadership is committed to making changes based on the information they receive.

## More good ideas...

- Recognizing that food bank customers also shop in grocery stores, the Pantry Shelf established a coupon exchange in their waiting area. “Price is important to our customers, and we can’t provide everything, so why not give them coupons?” comments Pat King, Director. A sign on the coupon exchange box encourages customers to both bring and take coupons, and the coupons are being used.
- To better serve its diverse customer base, Tri-Cities Food Bank provides a multilingual fact sheet with instructions for registering and using their food bank in Vietnamese, Thai, Ukrainian, Russian, and Spanish. Rules about going through the food bank, an explanation of how the amount of food based on family size, and other basic information is outlined. “It’s important that people go through in a timely manner if we are busy, and we try to stay in the background so people don’t feel watched. This helps them be independent,” comments Art King, Director.
- Hopelink noticed that some of their senior food bank customers have mobility problems, and had difficulty carrying their groceries home. At one point to solve the problem, Hopelink loaned rolling hand carts (like those used to carry a suitcase) to senior customers. They asked customers to sign them out just like a library book.



# Community Relations

Emergency food programs need to be in constant dialogue with their community. As is evident throughout this catalog, strong relationships with all sectors of the community — low-income adults and families, business leaders, philanthropists, service clubs, faith communities — inform decision-making, reveal new sources of support and partnership, give your program greater visibility and reach, and enhance your reputation and your ability to fight hunger. The best practices below are organized into three categories: collaboration, public engagement and advocacy, and fundraising.

In addition, we offer the following general best practices for strong community relations:

- Network and participate in coalitions that connect you with other emergency food providers. Food banks, meal programs and other anti-hunger programs have a lot in common, and staying in touch, attending statewide conferences, and joining local coalitions is likely to pay off for your organization in multiple ways. The successes of coalitions based in King, Kitsap, Spokane and Whatcom counties are sprinkled throughout this catalog, illustrating the old adage that there is strength in numbers.
- Increase your connectivity in the local community. Participate in civic organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and service clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis. These forums will give you a big picture perspective on your community and how your efforts fit into the larger scheme of community building and economic development. They are also a goldmine of potential supporters, board leaders and partners.
- Educate the broader community. Engage in discussions with people of all ages in your community about hunger and solutions to end hunger. People who are informed about the problem of hunger in their community and the best ways to combat it are likely to become strong supporters of your efforts. However, they may need you to connect the dots. For example, it may not be obvious to casual food drive donors that your need for cash is greater than your need for cans.

## Collaboration: Working in Coalition & Creating Partnerships

### Starting a Coalition—Finding Power in Numbers!

Feed Spokane!

Spokane



Following in the footsteps of Meals Partnership Coalition in Seattle and Portland's Fork it Over, Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP) wrote a grant proposal to convene a coalition of meal programs, recognizing that there's power in numbers. Staffing was provided through an AmeriCorps\*VISTA who did the initial project research and then convened the coalition. Their first project was the Food Rescue Pilot Program, working initially with five to six restaurants to do a weekly pickup of food donations, which are taken to the walk-in cooler at the Women's and Children's Free Restaurant, then shared amongst participating coalition members depending on need and capacity. Next was a bus pass pilot project to assist with customer transportation. The coalition has filed their 501(c)3 paperwork with the Internal Revenue Service, says 2nd-year Coordinator Holly Chilinski, and is awaiting the decision. What's next? Collaborating to recruit and train volunteers. "Everyone has a lot of energy about it and that's what keeps things going," says Chilinski.

**What it Takes:** The first requirement is a commitment to convene the group and identify a good first project that benefits partners. Startup funding and/or staffing is helpful to jumpstart project work.

"Everyone has a lot of energy about the coalition and that's what keeps things going!"

– Holly Chilinski, Coordinator  
Feed Spokane!

## Sparkling Anti-Hunger Activism

Anti-Hunger Coalition  
Whatcom County



Whatcom County's Anti-Hunger Coalition (AHC) started because there was some tension between local programs regarding territory and donor relationships with stores. It wasn't clear who was rescuing food from which stores, and what each food bank or meal program's service area was. The group came together to clarify who serves who, coordinate open hours so that more days were covered, and to make sure that all stores were being asked to donate, but only by a single program. Once clarity of roles was addressed and relationships were built, AHC focused on networking and sharing of effective practices, such as leads on cheap stuff, how to buy a truck, etc. Many years later, the coalition still operates informally, with participation from food banks, tribes, meal programs and other anti-hunger advocates (such as a gleaning project, Bellingham Community Meal, and students working on anti-hunger projects at Western Washington University). Networking and mutual support are still high on the group's agenda. However, they have also gotten involved in political education.

A few years ago, the group was sitting around complaining that at the local candidates' forums, there was a lot of talk about environmental issues, but no one was talking about other issues affecting low-income people. AHC created a candidate's forum for mayoral, and city council and county council candidates where they ask pointed questions about issues such as hunger and homelessness, such as "What do you think the city's role should be in ending hunger?" Candidates make public statements about what they will do, and AHC can hold them accountable. Organizationally, AHC benefits from having a paid facilitator to coordinate and run their meetings. This person is paid by Bellingham Food Bank (BFB) out of general operating funds. Mike Cohen, BFB Executive Director, comments, "I don't have the time to do the facilitation, and it's nice because it's not being directed by the EFAP lead agency—the facilitator manages the agenda. If things ever got contentious, it would be helpful." He also notes that AHC is not a forum for EFAP-related business, and welcomes all anti-hunger programs and advocates. This helps keep the focus on issues, not dollars.

**What it Takes:** A broad focus on ending hunger helps draw on diverse community programs and resources. Keep your coalition simple. Set a consistent meeting time and place. If you are having trouble figuring out where to start, identify common issues that affect all emergency food programs, such as the Letter Carriers' Food Drive, or coordination around holiday events. Larger organizations within the coalition may be in the best position to contribute resources: meeting space, money for refreshments or supplies, or funds to pay a facilitator.

## Linking with Growers

Hunger-Free Thurston County  
Olympia



Hunger-Free Thurston County is a focused coalition consisting of two local growers, Thurston County Food Bank, and the Gleaner's Coalition. The growers are Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB), a program that works with at-risk youth and promotes farming and gardening, and Left Food Organics, a program that employs people with disabilities in working a small farm. Both are well-connected with other local growers, including farmers, home gardeners and special projects such as the Kiwanis Food Bank Garden. The coalition was initiated by GRuB in conjunction with a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant-funded project, and designed to outlast the grant period. A major benefit of Hunger Free Thurston County is that GRuB hosts a growers meeting each winter that brings growers together and provides a forum for TCFB to say, "Please don't grow zucchini, we can use corn, winter produce, and other items." At the growers' meeting, everyone is encouraged to fill out a one-page commitment form that states how much they plan to grow of what plants for donation to TCFB. This helps TCFB know what to expect and make sure they don't receive too much of the same thing.

**What it Takes:** Hunger-Free Thurston County is a small, strategic coalition between growers, gleaners and emergency food providers. Be clear regarding the strategic goal of your coalition, allow the goal to dictate membership, and stay focused.



## Collaborative Food Distribution Program

Jewish Family Service, Seattle

Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle, Bellevue



In September 1993, Jewish Family Service (JFS) formed a partnership with the Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle (JDS) to provide a food bank for more than 100 households of senior-aged Russians living in the Crossroads area of Bellevue. This program is a joint project of JFS and JDS with the dual goal of serving food to the growing population of senior Russian immigrants and offering the JDS students an opportunity to give back to their community while learning about community service, hunger and poverty issues. Once per month, food is purchased from Pioneer Human Services' Food Buying Service and delivered to the JDS storage shed. As part of the 5th grade curriculum, classroom students help with the assembly of bags of groceries with teacher supervision. The bags include a variety of 10-15 items, such as cooking oil, canned goods, soap and toilet tissue. Food distribution occurs after students are dismissed. Additional adult volunteers then assist food bank staff members with food distribution. The partnership with the JDS and the efficient and effective use of resources at the JDS are critical to the success of the program.

**What it Takes:** The first step is to identify a public or private school partner. Meet with school administration and teachers to formalize relationship, including outlining clear expectations for the food program and for the school. Keep in mind that the school will need storage space. Develop program infrastructure, including how food will be procured and delivered to school, volunteers to assist with distribution, tracking of customers, and schedule for classroom involvement. Provide training to teacher(s) and volunteers on supervision of students, personal and food safety, and food distribution guidelines.

## Community Resource Center: Bringing a Range of Services Under One Roof

West Seattle Food Bank

Seattle



When the West Seattle Food Bank (WSFB) planned its new home, the organization elected to partner with others to develop a dynamic, multi-use building. The new West Seattle Community Resource Center has the food bank on the first floor, space that is leased to other community nonprofits on the second floor, and 34 units of low-income housing on upper floors. The housing is owned and operated by Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, while WSFB owns their space and the office space above. Tenants all share a large conference room which can also be rented to outside groups in the community. WSFB recognized the value of having other human service nonprofits in their building since their customers may overlap. Rents are set so that WSFB offsets their costs. WSFB is also partnering with additional providers who conduct outreach and offer services on site in their large waiting area. The lobby is big enough to accommodate outreach tabling by programs such as Basic Food and Lettuce Link, and there is also an adjoining private office that can be used by visiting service providers. "We invited others in before, but they ended up conducting outreach to people in the line outdoors. We are excited to have this space," comments Fran Yeats, Executive Director.

**What it Takes:** Capacity to own or lease additional space beyond the food bank's needs, property management skills, commitment to collaboration.





# Public Engagement and Advocacy

## Adapting a National Event Locally: Hunger Awareness Day

Ocean Shores Food Bank  
Ocean Shores



In conjunction with National Hunger Awareness Day sponsored by America's Second Harvest—The Nation's Food Bank Network (A2H), Ocean Shores Food Bank (OSFB) holds a food and donation drive at their local grocery store. The store participates by stocking needed items that the food bank requests, and flagging them with attention-getting orange shelf markers throughout the store. OSFB volunteers greet shoppers at the door throughout the day, and pass out flyers about Hunger Awareness Day. They use materials from A2H to organize and publicize the event, and used Food Lifeline, A2H and OSFB logos across top of letter. "It's important for people to know that it's part of a national day, we really want to hook into that," comments Dalene Edgar, Chairperson of the Food Bank Committee. This type of event raises awareness of hunger and provides an opportunity for anyone to donate at the level they can. "I have an image of a senior on a fixed income donating a jar of peanut butter and feeling really good about it, really connected," says Edgar. She continues to say that another woman at this year's event said, "What do you mean there's hunger in our community?" After a 20 minute conversation with an OSFB volunteer, and — now — a real belief that hunger exists in Ocean Shores, she gave a \$200 check. Overall, the drive raised \$1,700 in cash and collected over 2,000 pounds of food. "We had an extremely successful day. It raises awareness, which is the whole idea. Many people don't know that there is a food bank."



**What it Takes:** OSFB used A2H materials to help craft their press release. Local papers carried articles about the event before and after. OSFB has a strong relationship with the local grocery store and the store manager, who supported the event. ASH also provided orange lapel ribbons, and these were very popular for people to wear and show their support. "We decided to keep it really simple," Edgar comments. "We tried to reach people so they can understand it, they can all participate. For us, the food drive was simple and people understood it. I went on the A2H website and read about what others did. You need to make it work for your community."

## Taking It to City Hall: Engaging Public Officials

Seattle Food Committee, Meals Partnership Coalition and the City of Seattle  
Seattle



The Mayor's End Hunger Awards originated as a program of the United States Conference of Mayors in the early nineties. At that time, City of Seattle staff brought the idea to the Seattle Food Committee (SFC) and encouraged nominations. Now, Seattle Food Committee (SFC) and the Meals Partnership Coalition (MPC) work with the city to maintain the program, which includes recognition of five individuals and/or organizations doing extraordinary work to end hunger at an annual luncheon (timed in October near World Food Day). Nominations are solicited each year in several categories: business or community partners, volunteers—group or individual, and program leadership—individual or organization.

The event raises awareness of the work being done in emergency food and the people who support these city-wide systems. Award winners are often people who are donating thousands of hours or dollars worth of goods or services to the emergency food system. It's also an opportunity for food bank staff to meet and share their work with the Mayor and City Council turnout from public officials has been great. For the past few years, the event has been held at one of Northwest celebrity chef Tom Douglas' restaurants with his strong support. Attendees pay \$20 which helps cover the event costs. "We make sure it's a quick program and a great event with a great location and food. We are lucky to have the Mayor's commitment to be there to give the awards. It makes people feel really special," comments Trish Twomey, Food Resources Manager, Solid Ground. There is no fundraising ask at the event. Press coverage has varied over the years.

**What it Takes:** This event requires management of the nomination and selection process, coordination logistics and registration for the event, and handling of press relations. Many SFC members contribute — one person brings flowers for the tables, another picks some up for the awardees, a local company donates the plaques and these small touches help make the event a success. Hunger Awards could be done on a smaller scale in other communities, with simple certificates and a dessert reception rather than a luncheon. A relationship with a local restaurant to host is helpful, and you will definitely need a public official who is committed to be present and recognize awardees. It can be difficult to get small food banks to participate in nominating their leaders. Even with a simple nomination process, consider doing additional outreach to these programs so they can also be recognized along with more established, staffed programs.

## Building Visibility and Brand Identity

Good Cheer Food Bank  
South Whidbey Island



Good Cheer Food Bank worked with a local communications specialist to develop a marketing campaign that has improved overall brand identity and enhanced hunger awareness on South Whidbey Island. The first objective of the marketing program was to increase food bank funding. A “three-legged stool” funding model identified the need for increased thrift store revenues, community donations and grants. Good Cheer has successfully increased thrift store revenues and community donations, and will focus on scaling up grants after the capital campaign ends in 2008. Other objectives include increasing its volunteer base and collecting in-kind donations. The success of the outreach program can be attributed to “smart marketing” techniques to raise awareness of Good Cheer through newsletters, posters, special events, press releases and advertising with the tagline of “creating a hunger-free community.” As a result of these efforts, public visibility, thrift store revenues, community donations, food allotments and numbers of volunteers steadily increased.

**What it Takes:** The marketing program could be replicated if customized to meet the needs of a particular food bank. Elements of this marketing campaign included a logo, tagline, informational Q&A brochures, two-color newsletter, mailing list, and website. Funding is needed for the advertising budget and communications consultant, or you may try to attract a consultant to work pro bono, the professional word for “free.”

## Get Yourself to the Table: Being a Community Partner

North Helpline  
Seattle



The North Helpline (NH), which runs the Lake City Food Bank, is actively engaged in the life of their community. Their executive director participates in the Economic Development Council of Lake City (EDCLC) as well as the Lake City Chamber of Commerce. As a result, both groups are supportive of NH’s work, and see the organization as an integral part of their community. Many of the local businesses represented have employees who rely on the food bank, and they recognize that. Meetings are a chance to share information and get support. EDCLC has a diverse membership, including apartment owners, business owners, and social service organizations. Together, the group has a good picture of their community and generates realistic ideas for community improvement. Executive Director Rita Anderson, who represents NH, indicates that she has learned a lot at the meetings about homelessness from another member who runs a service program through a local church. Anderson also feels that she has the backing of the business community as she enters into negotiations with a new landlord, and that they will advocate for NH if needed. “It’s important that we are looked upon as a business,” says Anderson. “I see this as a leadership issue. You don’t do anything in isolation, and you need those around you to get things done.”

**What it Takes:** Active involvement in a local chamber or other community organization takes time and energy, and may pay off over the long term rather than immediately. North Helpline is able to participate actively in several local business associations because they share the time commitment among several staff and volunteers. Serving as a liaison is also a good board member contribution, and good relations with the local chamber may lead to additional board or volunteer recruits in the future.

“It’s important that we are looked upon as a business. You don’t do anything in isolation, and you need those around you to get things done.”

– Rita Anderson, Executive Director  
North Helpline

## Digging In: Engaging the Public in New Ways

Mother Earth Farm, Emergency Food Network  
Pierce County



The Emergency Food Network (EFN) envisions a strong, local food system that prioritizes food security for low-income residents. As a part of this vision, EFN runs the Mother Earth Farm in Orting, where it has a long-term land lease on eight acres of farmland that produced more than 138,000 pounds of fresh food last year distributed through the emergency food system. Food is harvested in the early mornings and transported to designated locations for pickup by local emergency food programs.

This project is a good example of partnerships and collaboration because the farm operation depends on 1,100 volunteers and just one paid staff person. EFN has tapped groups of employees from corporations such as Boeing, Kraft, and Frank Russell Company, just to name a few. Staff from Metro Parks Tacoma help out, along with children from local childcare centers and schools — with some schools tying the farm work in with their curriculum. Inmates from the Washington Correctional Center for Women at Purdy also provide many hours of volunteer labor. Finally, the farm has sparked lots of interest among the general public (who are then educated about emergency food system needs and often become donors). Furthermore, the land is leased at one dollar per year from a supporter.

When asked how this project came to be, Executive Director David Ottey shared, “We decided to do it because the opportunity came up and the board allowed it to happen. We were afforded the ability to do this because we are a local, Pierce County organization. We have deep roots in our community, relationships that led to this. I believe the most effective response to the local hunger problem is a local effort.” He also adds that, “We were told that an organization like ours can’t do this. We are now in year seven. It’s a great source of community pride.”

EFN is building on this success with additional local food projects. It has planted a 13-acre orchard on land connected to an affordable housing project developed by the Korean Women’s Association, and is in negotiations to start a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project that will preserve Pierce County farmland and generate revenue as a social enterprise to underwrite some of the operating costs of Mother Earth Farm.

**What it Takes:** An affordable, long-term lease on land; a person knowledgeable enough to rebuild soil and prepare the land for farming; an upfront, visionary funder to underwrite the first year of operations; strategic partnerships; ability to rally community support and media attention; and, the capacity to harvest and distribute fresh produce grown.

## All Aboard! Hunger/Emergency Food Provider Tours

Seattle Food Committee  
Seattle



During the month of August, Seattle Food Committee (SFC) members visit area emergency food programs instead of holding a regular meeting. A new tour is developed each year highlighting a theme of interest to members (new equipment, remodeled programs, a neighboring community). The tour lasts the better part of a day, and visits five to six programs for 30-45 minutes each (lunch is served at one of the sites).

The tour is particularly educational for distribution center staff, administrative staff or board members who wouldn’t otherwise get out and see multiple programs, so it attracts a different crowd from those who attend SFC coalition meetings. “You always learn new things,” notes Trish Twomey, Food Resources Manager, Solid Ground. “It might be little things, like a new way to hold plastic bags when loading them, but there is always something.”

Last year, SFC and Meals Partnership Coalition took this idea further and offered a separate tour for funders and public officials. It was a great way to educate them about what is happening “on the ground.” This tour was kept short — two hours plus lunch at a hot meal program — because they knew legislators and program officers have demanding schedules.

**What it Takes:** An organizer to pull the tour together. In this case, Food Resources contacts the programs to be visited and handles the arrangements. This past year, they even graduated to using a tour bus so that everyone could ride together to each site (in the past, tour participants carpooled). While this cost money, it was great to promote information sharing and networking en route. SFC charges attendees part of the cost of their lunch, and this seems to lessen last minute no-shows.

## Making Your Case: Documenting Unmet Customer Need

Thurston County Food Bank  
Olympia



Thurston County Food Bank (TCFB) has been collecting information about the level of unmet need in their food bank, and sharing the information with Washington State Senators and other elected officials to demonstrate the need for supplemental funding. In particular, with the amount of federal commodities dropping, TCFB wanted to document unmet need for this program. They decided to use the existing program sign-in sheet, and ask people to sign in if they qualified for the commodities program, even if no commodities were available. They then marked these sign-in sheets noting that no food was available to distribute to these customers. Their message to legislators: “Here are all the people who meet the guidelines for TEFAP, but couldn’t access food. The information is compelling,” says Executive Director Robert Coit. “These are real people, real signatures, real addresses. This is not a generalization or blanket statement.” TCFB didn’t want to create a separate system to measure unmet need. They used what was already in place.

**What it Takes:** This effort would be easy to duplicate. You will need to coach your volunteers to explain the rationale, perhaps even provide a script, so that it is clear to customers why you are asking them to sign even though they can’t receive food that day. TCFB has primarily done this with customers that they have a relationship with, so that they don’t confuse a new customer or lose trust. In order to make sure that customers get the message about how their signature makes a difference, you may want to have a regular, trained volunteer make the request.

### Bricks & Mortar: Running a Successful Capital Campaign

What is a capital campaign? It’s a special fundraising drive to pay for a major capital project such as a new building, building renovation, or purchase of costly equipment. The campaign pays for a one-time cost, usually “bricks and mortar.” The following tips come from Cecilia Chavez, Executive Director of Toppenish Community Chest, and Fran Yeats, Executive Director of West Seattle Food Bank, two organizations that have run successful capital campaigns to build new facilities.

- Strengthen your board of directors. Your board should be connected with different segments of the local community, and be united in their support for the project.
- Complete a feasibility study — an assessment of community support for your project and whether you can meet your fundraising goal. You need to look at your internal capacity to carry out a capital campaign, and understand your donor base and whether they will support your project. The feasibility study helps you understand what resources are in your community that you can tap for support and increases visibility for the project.
- Determine the nature of your project, and set a realistic campaign goal. Are you building a simple, warehouse style structure or community showplace? Will you build alone or co-locate with other community services? Multi-use projects can be wonderful, but they are also more complex and can be more expensive ventures.
- Anticipate increasing costs. WSFB’s project costs skyrocketed from \$1.2 million to \$3.3 million from initial design concept to finished construction.
- Map out your community to identify potential supporters. TCC looked at “everyone” in their community — churches, businesses and individuals. They would request an appointment and go and make their presentation and request support. Most were able to help, though you need to be prepared to have a few doors slammed in your face.
- Be aware that fundraising consultants don’t do the fundraising for you. Staff and volunteer leadership is required from within your organization to strategize and ask for gifts.
- Cultivate legislators so they will assist you in accessing public funding at the city, county or state levels.

## Going Beyond Emergency Food: Advocacy

Oregon Food Bank  
Portland



The mission of Oregon Food Bank (OFB), a distribution center, is to eliminate hunger and its root causes. According to Advocacy Director Jon Stubenvoll, OFB's Advocacy Department is "the root causes part." OFB's advocacy efforts are focused on influencing policy that affects hungry and low-income people in Oregon and Clark County, Washington. This means working on a range of issues, including food and nutrition, housing, public welfare programs, predatory lending, energy and weatherization assistance, minimum wage and tax policy. "A core question to ask," says Stubenvoll, "is what is this thing we call advocacy?" OFB is moving from a public education and outreach focus (for example, outreach to encourage food stamp enrollment) to a primary focus on public policy advocacy — direct legislative advocacy at the State level, as well as some at the local and federal levels. Their feeling is that this emphasis is most efficient, because it has the potential to positively impact large numbers of low-income people with long lasting benefits.

Stubenvoll's tips for organizations interested in getting involved in advocacy:

- Engage your board of directors, and make sure your organization is committed to advocacy. This may be a new type of activity, especially for direct service providers.
- Clearly define what you mean by advocacy. Does advocacy mean public education, public outreach, or influencing public policy?
- Build advocacy into your strategic plan, and set specific advocacy goals. How will you impact root causes in an organized and thoughtful way? Being strategic might mean thinking about which issues are most important to your organization and constituents, for example, the TEFAP (commodities) program or the Food Stamp Program. Or perhaps you have a high percentage of disabled or senior customers, and want to advocate on those issues.
- Determine what efforts are underway already. What coalitions of organizations are working on that issue? How can we make a meaningful contribution? Can we join forces?
- Be careful! Once you put yourself out there, you will be asked to join many coalitions, sign on to many efforts. While they may all be worthwhile, it is easy to get scattered or overwhelmed. Before agreeing to work on something, think about how you want to spend your limited time.

### Can nonprofits lobby?

OFB has overcome the fears that nonprofits typically have regarding advocacy, and is clear about the IRS rules for lobbying. In general, 501(c)3 nonprofits can put some of their resources toward lobbying — as much as 20% — without fear of losing their tax-exempt status, as long as they follow Internal Revenue Service rules. A resource for understanding the rules is the Children's Alliance publication *Nonprofits Can Lobby: A Brief Overview of Federal and State Regulations*, available online at <http://www.childrensalliance.org/4Download/nonprofitscanlobby>.





# Fundraising: From Individuals to Special Events and Everything In between

## Everyone Counts: Individual Giving Program

Ballard Food Bank  
Seattle



Last year, more than 1,600 individuals and companies made financial contributions to the Ballard Food Bank (BFB). BFB has developed a good program for fundraising from individuals, and raises the bulk of their \$340,000 cash budget from individual donations. Their primary cultivation (relationship building) and solicitation — asking someone for money — methods include quarterly newsletters sent to all 3,000 people on their mailing list, sending out two direct mail solicitations annually, and offering recurring donation opportunities (via credit card pledge) through their website. In addition, BFB has some very loyal donors that send checks every month to support their work. Shane Rock, Interim Executive Director, observes that individuals are the core of giving to nonprofits. Grant funding can be intermittent, but individuals are dependable year in and year out.

**What it Takes:** At BFB, the executive director plays a major role in coordinating fundraising efforts. Reliable and dedicated volunteers take on some aspects, such as generating thank you letters, and where skilled volunteers are not available, BFB outsources some work to contractors such as a mail house that sorts and labels the newsletter for bulk mailing. Contacts are managed using an online donor database system.

Rock offers two key strategies for individual fundraising:

- Articulate a clear and compelling mission and communicate that mission to as many people as possible.
- Develop relationships. Donors give because they have a connection to your organization, so reach out to people most likely to be interested in the work you do.
  - Volunteers are a good place to start. They can be ambassadors for the organization, and identify interested individuals or organizations that your organization can follow-up with and ask for a donation.
  - Next, strengthen relationships with vendors and contributors of in-kind gifts, and ask them to consider financial support.
  - Participate in and cultivate community organizations such as churches, Rotary Club, chambers of commerce
  - Recruit a connected board of directors. BFB has 10 people with really good connections, particularly in the business community.

## Show Me the Money: Generating Revenues through a Thrift Store

Inter-Faith Treasure House  
Camas



Inter-Faith Treasure House (IFTH) runs a thrift store in the same building as their food bank. IFTH has 200-300 shoppers per day, and the thrift store revenues are an important source of funds to purchase food. Their thrift store generates income of \$150,000-\$160,000 per year. Nancy Wilson, Director, notes that a thrift store requires community support, and that it takes a while for donors to learn about what types of donations are acceptable. Having the thrift store is complementary to the food bank in that IFTH can offer food bank customers clothing vouchers for use at the thrift store.

**What it Takes:** A thrift store is labor intensive, and requires a reliable corps of volunteers. IFTH is open six days a week, with four clerks on duty each day (two in the morning and two in the afternoon), plus a paid store manager (known as the Person in Charge) and four to five sorters to sort through new donations. IFTH has a volunteer manual and teams new volunteers up with experienced mentors for training. Wilson stresses the importance of reporting back to the community regarding what you are doing with the money, so they are committed to giving more. Finally, operating a thrift store requires finding a good location, and maintaining a bright, uncluttered store with quality merchandise.



## Show Me More Money: Effective Special Events

North County Community Food Bank  
Battleground



North County Community Food Bank (NCCFB) has an array of special events that raise funds to support their operations. NCCFB does two garage sales each year, a Victorian tea luncheon in the spring, a “Cruise In” car show and a fall dinner auction. The events net between \$2,000 (per garage sale) up to \$35,000 for the dinner auction. One of the special things they do at selected events is bring in local celebrities (such as the fire chief, mayor and the county sheriff) to serve tables. In addition to developing special events that engage different segments of the community, NCCFB uses direct mail and a giving circle to encourage further individual contributions. All these events bring in new donors, and NCCFB mails them all a solicitation letter during the holiday season. This appeal has a twist: donors are invited to make a gift in honor of a friend rather than purchase a traditional gift. NCCFB then sends a special card acknowledging the gift to that person. NCCFB also created APPLE — the Association of People Providing Life Essentials, a circle of donors who give \$100 per year or more. They publicize this giving opportunity by branding their three biggest events — the tea, auction and car show — as APPLE events. APPLE members may give a single one-time gift or pledge as little as \$10 per month.

**What it Takes:** “Make sure you have a crew to help you — you can’t do it alone,” says Elaine Hertz, Executive Director. Everyone pitches in to plan NCCFB’s array of events, including all staff and volunteers, and they are often involved in planning for several events simultaneously. Each event has specific demands. For example, the car show requires a permit for the location, outreach to local car clubs, sponsors for the event and for each trophy awarded, t-shirts, publicity, and a system to register cars. Hertz values sponsors particularly as they contribute in advance, providing funds that are critical to pay out event costs in advance of most of the proceeds coming in. NCCFB is set up to accept credit card donations — this is necessary for events, but also works out well as they can accept donations by phone.

## Make it Your Own: Tailoring Events to Meet Specific Needs

Walk for Rice, Asian Counseling and Referral Service  
Seattle



Walk for Rice is a major annual fundraising event for Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) Food Bank and Nutrition Programs. Due to the strength and dedication of volunteers, the Walk for Rice has grown from a small grassroots effort into an annual event that gathers over 1,000 participants. Some proceeds come from corporate sponsorships, but the bulk of funding comes from individuals who make donations as well as collect donations from others. Local businesses and community organizations form teams to fundraise and display solidarity against hunger in the community. In addition to raising money, the event raises public awareness of hunger and in particular, the needs of low-income members of the Asian Pacific American community. For example, ACRS is committed to keeping rice, a staple of most Asian diets, available at its food bank on a regular basis. Walkers are motivated to raise funds to meet this culturally specific need. “We need a message that resonates,” comments Gary Tang, ACRS Aging and Adult Services Director. “Walk for Rice — our message about Asians needing rice is really simple. People get it and they understand that all they need to do is walk for rice so people won’t go hungry.”

**What it Takes:** Advisory Committee, six month timeframe for planning and handling of all event logistics, including: reserve date and location, line up sponsors, develop publicity materials, conduct outreach to recruit walkers, register participants, line up volunteers and entertainment. Over time, as the event becomes more established, your effort to secure sponsors and your learning curve will lessen.

“We send out a newsletter twice a year thanking our community for their support and telling them the needs of our customers. We have a great response. Since we are all volunteers and we have been doing this for almost 14 years, our community knows we are committed to helping our neighbors in need and they willingly help us.”

– Fran Walster, Director, Maltby Food Bank

## A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned: In-kind Contributions

Reach Out Food Bank  
Ocean Park



In-kind contributions are a vital part of any non-profit's budget. Reach Out Food Bank (ROFB) had a problem with theft of food from their freezer, and decided to increase security by installing an alarm system. "Our food is hard to come by," comments Mickey Padgett-Schmale. Fortunately, the husband of one of ROFB's volunteers works for a local security company, and his company donated the alarm system and ongoing monitoring. The relationship is still going strong four years later. After the security system (with prominent signs and individual security codes issued to volunteers) was installed, the thefts stopped. ROFB has also received other great in-kind donations thanks to volunteers, like their website. It's maintained and paid for by another volunteer.

**What it Takes:** ROFB's leadership is talented at tapping volunteer skills and connections in unexpected ways. ROFB recognizes their business donors in a letter to the editor sent twice a year to the local newspaper. In addition, they provide their donors with an annual letter acknowledging the value of their in-kind contribution of monthly service fees.

## Empowering Local Programs: Fundraising Technical Assistance

Rural Resources  
Colville



Rural Resources has a radical philosophy when it comes to fundraising. They believe that EFAP lead agencies should not be raising money for their emergency food programs in areas where their fundraising competes with that of local food banks they serve. "Don't cook in your own backyard," says Dan Speare, Community Services Program Manager. "If we start competing with the local food banks for product or funds, we undermine the little nonprofits that are eeking out an existence in rural Eastern Washington." Instead, Rural Resources focuses on soliciting large corporations rather than local businesses and individuals. They see it as their role to provide fundraising technical assistance to individual food banks. Rural Resources has assisted food banks in three of the 13 counties they serve with donor research such as information on income levels and types of housing in particular ZIP codes, and encouraged several food banks to work together on a mail campaign. They also support Northport Food Bank's Friday Night Out annual event which draws a crowd to the small town of Northport for dinner, live entertainment and dancing. Rural Resources' information technology staff person has also assisted the small food banks they serve. "You have to figure out who you are working for," says Speare. "We work for our food banks."

**What it Takes:** Working this way is a philosophical commitment by Rural Resources because they know that the philanthropic capacity in small towns is limited. Their approach means that Rural Resources may pass on fundraising opportunities in certain communities, and even watch as the smaller organization fails to maximize a particular opportunity. However, they feel that their approach strengthens overall community capacity in the long run.

### Dear Sue, Advice on Grantwriting

*Sue Allen, Executive Director, Capitol Clubhouse, Olympia*

- One person doesn't write a grant, it takes a team to write a good grant. Make sure you have a team.
  - Look at other people's grants that have been successful.
  - Make sure there is a match between the funder's mission and yours.
  - Don't make mistakes. Follow their guidelines and wording. If not, they will drop it in the garbage.
  - Remember that grants are usually either small or very competitive. It's not as easy as it used to be.
- According to Sue, a veteran grantwriter, partnerships and local relationships are the best way to go.

*A great resource that we found in our travels through our friends at World Hunger Year is [www.npguides.org](http://www.npguides.org). The "np" stands for non-profit and it's a website entirely about grantwriting! Templates are included.*

## Plug In: Maximizing Community Networks

Willapa Food Bank  
Raymond



Talk to Director Evelyn Ritenburgh about fundraising for the Willapa Food Bank, and she'll immediately say, "I'm the wrong person to talk to. We don't do any fundraising here. We are fortunate to have enough resources." The food bank is so successful, they turn down revenues from a local thrift shop run by the Ministerial Association, encouraging them to donate elsewhere. Further investigation reveals that the Willapa Food Bank has enough resources because they have outstanding visibility and a great reputation in their small community. The food bank benefits from a number of third party fundraisers — charity events organized by others where the proceeds go to the food bank. These include a "Food Bowl" competition at the local schools, and fundraising and food drives at the local hospital and local businesses such as Curves®, the women's gym, that take place annually. At the United Church, a food bank volunteer has taken to handing out grocery bags as his fellow parishioners leave church services, and asking them to bring them back full the following Sunday. Ritenburgh also notes that if they are short on something, she can give the Elks or other local lodges and service clubs a call, and "food shows up on our doorstep." How do they do it? "A lot of talking," says Ritenburgh. "Everyone in town knows me, and knows that I am with the food bank. And our local paper runs a listing for us every week. We are amazed at the cooperation." The small town-feel of Raymond, and overlapping memberships among food bank volunteers, civic clubs and churches are helpful in keeping the lines of communications open.

## More Fundraising Ideas

- The Maltby Food Bank had an event at Ruby's Diner, which donated the cost of the meals purchased by food bank supporters who went to the diner that night and turned in the official event flyer, netting \$300. **Why it's a good idea:** *Restaurants events are a win/win for your program and the local restaurant. The restaurant gets the chance to be a good corporate citizen, which creates some good publicity and new customers. The food bank gets needed funding and increased community visibility. An event like this makes giving easy and fun.*
- When the Loon Lake Food Pantry & Resource Center bought their new building, they started a monthly giving club. Members pledge \$25 per month, and know the money is going to pay off the food bank's mortgage. **Why it's a good idea:** *Donors willing to commit ongoing support over time provide stable revenues and reduce the cost of fundraising. Donors like giving for a specific purpose, such as paying the mortgage. Offering a chance to give monthly makes giving larger amounts more affordable for donors.*
- The Food Ball is an annual fundraiser and food drive that plays on the traditional rivalry between Aberdeen and Hoquiam High Schools by having high school students compete for most funds and most pounds of food collected during a 10-day period. Since its beginnings in 1981, the event has grown and now "supports five local food banks for from six months to a full year," says Jim Coates of the Grays Harbor/Pacific County Food Bank Distribution Center. **Why it's a good idea:** *It's engaging to high school students, it fills a social need in the community, it's an annual tradition that builds naturally over time, and as a "third party fundraiser," it doesn't require as much food bank staff or volunteer time.*
- Emergency Food Network is encouraging supporters to host a Baby shower on behalf of not one baby, but for the 44,000 babies from low-income families in Pierce County. Invitations and the party format will resemble a shower (with games designed to educate people about the needs of low-income families), but cash donations rather than baby gifts are solicited. At each shower, guests are also invited to consider hosting their own shower in the coming year. Krysta Willoughby, Marketing & Events Coordinator, notes that this strategy requires qualified hosts who are well-connected in the community and will follow-through and make their party great. Staff support is also needed to design invitations and activities. **Why it's a good idea:** *House parties are low-cost events (hosts offer their homes and often cover the costs of food and drink). Because they are intimate and personal, people are often moved to give more, and it's a great, easy way for your supporters to invite their friends to get involved.*

# Transportation

The area of transportation presents many challenges for emergency food providers. Fuel costs have risen steadily, and the costs of owning or leasing a truck are high. As the system shifts from primarily non-perishables to an emphasis on fresh and frozen foods, refrigerated transport is required to ensure food safety. Distribution centers and food banks are meeting these challenges by sharing resources and cooperating to maximize efficiency and ensure that trucks are full rather than empty as they move food around the state. General best practices in transportation include:

- Distribution centers and larger agencies investing in trucking equipment and transporting food on behalf of smaller food banks and meal programs
- Food banks working in coalition to share the expenses and benefits of owning a shared vehicle
- Working in partnership with trucking companies and trucking schools who can provide donations of transportation and vehicle maintenance

## Going Places: Trucking School Partnerships

Community Services of Moses Lake, Inc., Moses Lake  
Lower Columbia Community Action Council, Longview



Community Services of Moses Lake, Inc. (CSML) partners with the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program at Big Bend Community College to safely and reliably transport food. The partnership is beneficial for both: students need to complete a certain number of hours of driving time and CSML needs additional transportation resources. CSML contracts with the CDL program to pickup from Northwest Harvest (NWH), Yakima once a month. They complete three direct drops to area food banks, and the rest comes to CSML in Moses Lake. The program promotes safety and maximizes resources. It also works out well for NWH, since they have to load one huge truck instead of nine little ones. "It's a win-win for everyone, as far as we can see," says Executive Director Linda Finlay. "Plus the drivers get to learn interpersonal skills — they're getting more than just a driving experience." One challenge with a school relationship is that there are always new drivers. However, the instructors are a constant, and handle the scheduling directly with NWH to match their changing class schedule. The partnership grew from a single volunteer who suggested that CSML staff meet his instructor. "I took some graphs showing how many families we're serving, mentioning community support," comments Finlay. Now the college itself brings in donations. It gives other people in the community, like the college and students in those classes, the opportunity to go into the food banks. "People have no idea what goes on in the food bank, so it's good exposure."

Like Community Services of Moses Lake, Inc., Lower Columbia Community Action Council (LCCAC) has a long standing partnership with a trucking school. In their case, their partner is Bates Technical College, which has retrieved food once a month from NWH for close to 10 years! Prior to this partnership, LCCAC was picking up food in a truck with a 6,000 pound limit, and some of the food banks in their area took trips on their own because they could get more than if they took a share of LCCAC's load. Now, BTC drops off a trailer at NWH one day, and picks it up again one or two days later. Their trailer can take triple or quadruple the load of LCCAC's truck. The partnership saves trips, cost and effort. Furthermore, BTC has a refrigerated truck to transport perishables. "It's a cost saver, and we are getting more food. It was hard to find volunteers to drive our truck up there as many times to get that amount," says Lois Shelton, Program Manager. "I just think it's a win-win," she continues. "The drivers get night-time driving training, variable weather, all up and down I-5. It's a two to three hour drive; it really gets them out on the road." As with CSML, the students change, but the instructor, who always rides with the student, stays consistent. One drawback is that BTC wants to train the students with the swing shift instructor, so LCCAC has to staff the warehouse after-hours. They feel the extra effort is worth the benefit in this case.

**What it Takes:** Both schools provide the trucks and drivers, and carry their own insurance coverage. CSML's board insists on an annual contract that releases them from liability. CSML covers gasoline costs at fifty cents per mile, while LCCAC sometimes shares fuel costs with BTC, but doesn't have a formal cost-sharing agreement. Students cannot participate in loading or unloading, so it's important to be able to field volunteers to unload the truck promptly on arrival.

## Door-to-Door: Distribution Center to Food Bank

Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Food Bank Distribution Center  
Hoquiam



Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Food Bank Distribution Center (GHPCFBDC) distinguishes itself by providing free delivery of food to most of its participating food banks. The decision to start delivering product was a practical one, according to Executive Director Jim Coates: “If you are going to operate a distribution center, you have to be able to control your system. If you don’t deliver, you’re not in the driver’s seat and can’t push the product you get in a timely manner. This is especially true now with the shift to perishables.” Before GHPCFBDC started deliveries, the food banks would come with cars and small trucks to pick up food, but often couldn’t take their entire allotment. In addition, it was a liability to have elderly volunteers loading heavy food in and out of regular cars. Now, GHPCFBDC has trucking routes worked out for deliveries to area food banks, and has grown their fleet of trucks to include three tractors and six trailers as well as smaller vehicles. Dealing with rising costs has been hard, but GHPCFBDC remains committed to addressing the transportation challenge collectively rather than expecting individual food banks to work out solutions.

**What it Takes:** Jim Coates, Executive Director, notes that providing this level of service is not easy, and “has to be something you really want to do.” GHPCFBDC is able to offer the transportation in large part thanks to community involvement. For example, the local community college’s Commercial Driver’s License program provides some drivers, and a local trucking company repairs GHPCFBDC trucks at no labor charge.

## Fresh off the Truck: Delivering Perishables on a Just-in-Time Basis

Second Harvest Inland Northwest  
Spokane



Second Harvest Inland Northwest (SHIN) created the Mobile Food Bank project to expand the distribution of fresh produce, dairy and other perishable products to neighborhood food banks. Many neighborhood agencies lack the refrigeration capacity to handle large quantities of perishable products, so SHIN sets up deliveries of perishables during the local food bank’s open hours, distributing food on site directly from their refrigerated truck. The local agency promotes the distribution ahead of time and clients are given an opportunity to select perishable foods from the Second Harvest truck in addition to whatever they may receive from the local food bank. Not only does SHIN provide all the product at no cost and deliver it at the appropriate time for distribution, but they even organize additional volunteers to help with the distribution since they are aware that many local food banks may feel their volunteers are “tapped out.” They work primarily with organizations such as service clubs that are interested in supporting SHIN, particularly statewide service groups with a local presence in the areas where deliveries are being made. Now that the program has been up and running for a while, the drivers act as staff on arrival — they organize and orient volunteers, set-up and manage distribution. This project has helped SHIN deliver more than 200,000 pounds of perishable food in less than one year to communities throughout the region and in particular, rural communities. During the 10 months of the program, SHIN has made 27 deliveries to 17 different sites. “Turn out has been great,” says Executive Director Jason Clark, and they plan to expand the program, with a particular focus on reaching remote parts of their service area.

**What it Takes:** In addition to having a refrigerated truck and driver to make the delivery, this type of program requires the ability to handle and distribute perishables, to garner additional volunteers, and to promote the availability of food so that customers are there to receive it. SHIN has asked local radio stations to make announcements to supplement the local food bank’s promotional efforts. This encourages individuals and families to come on this date rather than other food bank open days.

“Fuel costs are so high, none of us can afford to roll those wheels empty.”

– Mike Regis, Director of Procurement  
Northwest Harvest

## Evaluation: Working for You

Rotary First Harvest  
Greater King County



Rotary First Harvest (RFH) acts as a conduit between farmers and the programs that serve hungry individuals and families in our region, collecting produce and other nutritious food and getting it into the existing emergency food distribution channels. Since their focus is on transporting food, they solicited funding to conduct research on ways to improve transportation for the hunger response network. The research was conducted by a professional research firm, and included key person interviews with diverse stakeholders such as commercial trucking groups who were donating services or offering reduced rates, as well as distribution centers and EFAP lead agencies receiving high volume donations. The resulting report provided fresh insights for RFH and their partners. To David Bobanick, Executive Director, important learnings included gaining insight into businesses motivations for donating and increased clarity about key transportation corridors and trucking hubs statewide. They also learned that “it’s a deal breaker if the truck and driver has to sit and wait at either end” of a donated trucking run, so they are working to reduce waiting times at both donation locations, such as cold storage facilities and distribution centers. These insights will allow RFH to be more strategic in deciding what donations to accept and to advocate for changes that will improve the experience of donors and their willingness to continue to provide pro bono trucking services.

**What it Takes:** Research can be an invaluable aid to meeting your mission and goals more strategically. In particular, listening to donors and other community partners can reveal new opportunities to leverage resources and talent for community benefit. Formal research such as the study RFH commissioned requires expertise to design effective and scientifically valid research methods. For this type of research, you may want to seek outside funding and/or join together with other organizations that would also benefit from the research in order to support consulting costs. The project will also require active involvement from your organization’s leadership to help define research questions and identify relevant stakeholders.

## Traffic Busters: Cooperative Trucking

Emergency Food Network  
Northwest Harvest  
Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Food Bank Distribution Center  
Western Washington



The agencies above have been collaborating for some time on transportation, sharing food and moving it out to people. By working together, the group is able to increase efficiency, reduce transportation costs, and take advantage of special opportunities. Recently, Emergency Food Network (EFN)’s Executive Director David Ottey received a call about a very large potential donation of frozen vegetables in Grandview and Wenatchee, Washington. The amount of food was too large for EFN to handle on their own, and without collaboration, they would have had to refuse the donation. After consulting with Northwest Harvest (NWH)’s Director of Procurement Mike Regis, a plan was worked out for NWH to secure temporary storage for the Grandview vegetables, while EFN dispatched a truck to retrieve the donated product in Wenatchee. On the way to Wenatchee, EFN’s driver stopped at NWH’s Seattle warehouse to pick up a load of food they needed delivered to Wenatchee, so the truck didn’t travel out there empty. Meanwhile, during this same 36-hour period, EFN received assistance from Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties Food Bank Distribution Center (GHPCFBDC), who drove to Oregon to pick up a donation on their behalf. Regis sees many benefits to the collaborative relationship these three organizations have developed: “Fuel costs are so high, none of us can afford to roll those wheels empty. We try to make the most efficient use of our equipment and professional staff. In addition, this increases our ability to serve donors — you have to make sure that when the donor calls, you can respond. And all of us are getting into delivery now. We receive more donations of frozen and chilled foods, and the health department has become more stringent about keeping food at safe temperatures, which means we need to deliver in refrigerated trucks.”

**What it Takes:** This collaboration has been very successful because all three agency leaders have a can-do attitude to help each other accept donations quickly. “We jump on it,” says Regis. To establish this type of collaboration, try to find partners who have a collaborative and can-do attitude when dealing with challenges — a willingness to go after the product and say thank you in a sincere way. For food banks in other parts of the state, going in together to share transportation costs may allow you to accept greater quantities and new types of donations, especially if together you can afford to share a refrigerated truck.



## Collaborating Locally: Sharing a Truck

In Seattle, South King County and Kitsap County, food bank coalitions are working together to ensure that they are able to get the deliveries they need from Food Lifeline (FLL), Northwest Harvest (NWH) and others. Here's how it's working for these coalitions:

- In Seattle, Solid Ground (SG) operates two trucks to provide delivery service to 19 of the 26 food banks in the city. One refrigerated truck is owned by SG. A second truck is leased three days a week. Both are driven by professional drivers employed by SG, and they also budget for maintenance and repairs, fuel, insurance and a cell phone system to communicate with the drivers. Thanks to City of Seattle funding, SG is currently able to offer delivery service to food banks free of charge. In the past, food banks have contributed to cover trucking costs based on a formula that accounts for their size and usage. The schedule has been developed over the years, and is difficult to change as many food banks plan their hours according to the delivery schedule. SG has a relationship with a local trucking service that provides substitute drivers when the regulars are ill or on vacation, and having these reliable substitutes has been very helpful.
- The South King County Food Coalition Transportation Project was developed to increase the capacity of emergency food providers in South King County. Instead of using rented trucks, unreliable paid transport service or volunteer transport, the Transportation Project pools resources from several agencies to purchase a truck and fund a driver to pick up and deliver donated food. Participating food programs have better access to food from FLL and NWH and other local businesses as a result. By sharing cost and transportation, food delivery is streamlined. After initial research and negotiation, funding was acquired to hire a part-time driver — three days a week — and to purchase a 20-foot delivery truck with a 12,000 pound payload and electric pallet jack. The Multi-Service Center (MSC) is the fiscal agent of the project and the primary owner and caretaker of the truck. Currently, six agencies operating eight programs are Transportation Project participants. Each agency pays a per-trip cost that covers part of the costs of operating the program, and grant funding covers remaining costs.
- In Kitsap County, many food banks benefit from Bremerton Foodline's truck. They carry FLL and NWH deliveries out to the north end of Kitsap County at a cost of \$20 per food bank per trip. This works well for everyone since the trucks used to drive that way empty en route to pick up donations of fresh produce from grocery stores in that area. The Kitsap County Food Bank Coalition (KCFBC) also has a partnership with a local trucking company. KCFBC collectively purchased a truck trailer, and the trucking company keeps the trailer at their location and makes monthly runs on the ferry to pick up food at NWH and deliver it. The trucking company donates their time and costs for these runs.

## Checklist of things to think about:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Truck (with or without lift gate)                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment for loading and unloading, such as a pallet jack or fork lift | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance and repair costs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Qualified driver  | <input type="checkbox"/> Roadside assistance          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance for the vehicle   | <input type="checkbox"/> Role of lead agency          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost sharing system          |

## Tips from the Pros:

- Make sure you have a skilled, reliable driver with a good driving record and the customer service and interpersonal skills to deal well with a changing array of volunteers and a variety of loading situations. They may need a Commercial Driver's License depending on the size of the truck, and should prioritize safety.
- In developing your budget, make sure to establish a maintenance reserve fund to cover repairs and upkeep costs for your truck. Research your insurance needs as well.
- Consider leasing a truck. The rental company may offer roadside assistance and insurance options, and you won't have to deal with repairs.
- Think through what additional equipment you may need, such as a lift gate and pallet jack. SKCFC keeps their pallet jack in the truck at all times. They can't load as many pallets, but the pallet jack can be used at each location.
- Grants and government funding are likely sources of capital to purchase the truck, but these donors will want to see your plan to sustain the project over time.
- Develop a cost-sharing plan that is affordable for participating food banks, and get their commitment to participate in advance. Consider inviting meal programs to participate, too.

# Organizational Strength & Capacity

Organizational strength and capacity building has a number of aspects. This section highlights effective operations, nonprofit infrastructure, and management of people.

## Operations

Nonprofit organizations need to develop appropriate policies and procedures to run their programs smoothly. The size and complexity of the organization should reflect the scope of programs, and an outside reviewer should express confidence that the organization is stewarding and using community resources effectively. General best practices in the operations arena include:

- Having written policies and procedures that are up-to-date and accessible.
- Sound financial management, including accurate and complete record keeping, annual budgeting and oversight of finances by the board of directors.
- Accurate tracking and reporting of program statistics.
- Records of all donations made to the organization, and donor contact information to cultivate future support and provide acknowledgement.
- Choosing an organizational structure and nonprofit status appropriate to meet the mission.
- Engaging in strategic planning to set goals for the organization, including adapting to a changing operating environment and preparing for disaster.

## Infrastructure: Facilities, Equipment & Technology

Recognition is growing that emergency food providers need infrastructure in order to consistently provide effective programs. Well-designed facilities, appropriate equipment, and adequate hardware and software to meet information technology needs are all critical success factors for nonprofits. At the same time, nonprofits are usually under-resourced and have trouble raising capital to invest in adequate infrastructure. The best practices in this section illustrate the power of investing in these areas. General best practices in the area of facilities, equipment and technology include:

- Designing or laying out food bank space in a way that maintains customer and worker dignity — inside waiting areas, space to allow for customer choice, and a pleasant work environment for volunteers and staff.
- Safe working conditions, with appropriate equipment to perform key tasks without strain.
- Computers and software that allow for accurate, secure management of client data and easy reporting to funding partners and donors.
- Telephone and internet access to support information and referral for customers.
- Refrigeration, sanitary areas for repacking food, and any other necessary facilities to ensure food safety and freshness.

## Leadership & Human Resources: Boards & Volunteers

Nonprofit organizations are nothing without people who care, and this is particularly true for anti-hunger organizations. Food banks and meal programs are heavily reliant on volunteers to perform most tasks, from food sorting to fundraising, governance to taking out the trash. Statewide, emergency food providers have an aging volunteer base and are adjusting to changes in volunteering trends. In the nonprofit sector as a whole, there is a trend toward increasing reliance on paid professional staff, but the emergency food industry remains primarily volunteer-driven, making it particularly important for them to effectively manage volunteers and establish working governance structures. General best practices in the area of leadership and volunteer management include:

- Establish an active board of directors who understand the range of nonprofit board responsibilities
- Draw volunteers from different sectors of the community, including groups and individuals, people of all ages and professions, and people who reflect the cultural and language groups represented in your customer base.
- Mentor and encourage the development of the next generation of leaders. Develop a leadership succession plan to reduce reliance on a single founder or a small group of volunteer leaders and ensure that the organization can continue after these individuals retire from active service.
- Supervise staff effectively: set clear expectations, evaluate performance annually, and offer support and opportunities for professional growth.

# Operations

## Joining Forces: Merger

Spokane Valley Partners  
Spokane



A few years ago, Spokane Valley Food Bank and Spokane Valley Community Center resolved to merge their services under one umbrella, Spokane Valley Partners, for the benefit of the community they serve. Although co-located for many years, the organizations had different organizational cultures, so the merger took time and effort on both sides. In order for the organizations to come together, both boards had to agree that this was in their organization's best interest to meet their missions, and the boards had to come together philosophically. The merger was compelling because it allowed them to operate more efficiently, increase their capacity for service, and gain more clout as a larger organization. "We are stronger financially, programmatically. Our programs complement each other," comments Ken Briggs, CEO. The food bank gained infrastructure such as better technology, information management systems, professional fundraising staff and better benefits for staff. The trust building process took time, both before and after the merger took place. The two organization's boards were very different — hands-on for the food bank, and policy-making for the community center. As part of starting fresh, the merged organization adopted a new name and agreed to hire a new CEO to oversee the new, larger organization. The executive director of the food bank stayed on as program director. Board members from both organizations were invited to join the new board.

**What it Takes:** Negotiating a merger requires board members who can think strategically and stay focused on their vision for the community, even if painful changes such as cutting staff or leaving one location are required in the short term. Board leaders must have the ability to build relationships and find common ground with the potential merger partner. Once the two boards agree to move forward with a merger, legal advice and/or consulting services to guide the process is helpful. Be patient — adapting to change takes time for everyone involved. Briggs also points out that programs interested in closer partnership can take incremental steps such as co-location, a shared accountant or development director, or a joint operating agreement. A merger doesn't need to be done in one fell swoop.

## Eliminating the Guesswork: Operations Manual

Loon Lake Food Pantry & Resource Center  
Loon Lake



Last year, Loon Lake Food Pantry & Resource Center took a major step toward shared leadership by getting vital information out of Director Sarah Nelson's memory and into a written operations manual. Thanks to a volunteer with great writing skills and an eye for detail who took the lead, they now have an operations manual. The manual covers everything from obtaining the food to storing the food to filling out all the forms required by funders and distribution centers. Lead volunteer Fred Mesch describes the manual as a "guide for the food bank perplexed."

**What it Takes:** Someone willing to document what you do in writing. Other food banks can benefit from Loon Lake's experience: copies of their manual are available from Washington Food Coalition, and you are encouraged by the author to "take from it mercilessly!"



## Saluting Good Ideas

Food Lifeline  
Seattle



Food Lifeline (FLL)'s Excellence Awards are designed to promote and share great ideas that will help end hunger. Begun in 2006, the program invites large and small agencies to nominate their best practices for recognition in several categories. The idea grew out of FLL's experience monitoring agencies that contract with them, and being impressed by the amazing work that agencies are doing but others may not see. "There are many 'best practices' that agencies develop but are unaware of how unique or effective they are compared to what other similar programs may be doing. They are also not necessarily aware of how many other agencies could benefit from borrowing their great idea," says Jill Watson, Agency Relations Manager. Although FLL always tried to share this information informally, the Excellence Awards gives the ideas more visibility, recognizes the agency publicly for their creativity, and encourages them with a cash award. Applications are solicited in four areas of excellence, and several FLL board members serve as judges. To promote fairness, judges evaluate applications with agency identifying information removed. Award winners are held secret until they are announced at the FLL annual agency conference, where they receive a plaque, a check and are publicly applauded for their work. FLL has tried to create a process that allows even the smallest volunteer-run agency with a great best practice to apply and win. By applying, agencies agree to share their idea, put it in a how-to format for others to read, and even polish their grantwriting skills.

**What it Takes:** FLL has worked to create an accessible, fair process for identifying and recognizing best practices in emergency food. For a program like this to work, it is important to keep the application and process simple and transparent. Designate a contact person to be available to answer questions or give advice to applicants. Set a realistic timeline allowing adequate time for each stage in the process. If you want to make awards on an annual basis, design your program to be sustainable and manageable over time.

## Get Ready: Preparing for Disaster

While many food banks and meal programs help families and individuals respond to the recurring emergency of hunger, they have yet to create and implement a plan to respond to a local or regional disaster or emergency. But recent natural disasters across the country and around the world have started some programs preparing before disaster strikes. Barb Shimizu, Coordinator, South King County Food Coalition (SKCFC) points to Hurricane Katrina which hit the Gulf States in September 2005 as the impetus for their disaster planning. "We realized that it was 'our customers' sitting stranded on those rooftops," she said. Emergency food programs are a valuable resource "in efforts to reach and educate vulnerable populations such as low-income families, immigrant populations, and shut-ins," says Shimizu.

With funding from King County, SKCFC completed an assessment as a first step that "will provide the foundation upon which we can build our emergency preparedness plans." The assessment gave SKCFC members a clearer picture of the hazards facing their community. An Americorps\*VISTA member from the Washington State ReadyCorps joined the SKCFC in December 2006 to assist members in completing their emergency plans and putting important pieces in place, such as making arrangements for each food bank to have an alternate location to operate from in the event that their facility is shut down due to disaster-related damage. "Acting together makes sense. If your neighbor doesn't have a strong plan and you do, there's a problem. We now understand how it is all going to fit together" adds Shimizu. SKCFC expects to continue their preparedness work together. "Consider the decision to purchase generators. Think of the duplication of effort if each food bank is researching generators separately. It makes sense for one person to research it and to seek funding together. The same goes for developing educational materials for our clients."

Seattle embarked on its own initiative which benefited from the six-month presence of Nick Maryns, a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow through the Congressional Hunger Center. The Seattle Food Committee (SFC), which represents each of the 27 food banks, worked to create an emergency response plan for local agencies. The plan aims to prepare food banks as a coalition, as individual agencies, and to educate customers. The primary goal is to enable food banks to communicate effectively, work together to share resources, and refer customers appropriately in a disaster situation. Maryns developed a comprehensive guide to disaster preparedness (see reference below), including a template for an emergency preparedness plan that would be useful to any food bank in any type of disaster. One thing that Maryns heard from food bank staff and volunteers is that they feel disaster-preparedness is important, but that they simply feel that they "don't have time" to tackle the issue. For individuals who feel this way, he suggests taking incremental steps — for example, dedicating five minutes once a month to prepare for an emergency. Though it can seem daunting and unrealistic amidst the urgent daily events of a food bank, there are simple measures that can be taken to better prepare for a disaster, he says.

Robin Rudy, Director, Tenino Community Service Center, took her first step by creating a special emergency pack for diabetics. It contains a cooler pack for insulin and room to hold pills and other items. Working with the Thurston County Public Health & Social

Services Department, she has helped prepare the Tenino Food Bank for an emergency by educating its volunteers and customers alike. All customers are regularly given pamphlets with their food bags, with information on what to do in a disaster, such as how to make one's own emergency package. Many food bags also contain a bar of soap, provided by the county to encourage hand-washing and other hygienic practices, to prevent the spread of the flu and other diseases. Rudy has also been working with Robert Coit, Executive Director, Thurston County Food Bank, on disaster preparedness at a county-wide level.

Maryns says one of the most important things in an emergency situation is to know who has what information, and who can do which tasks. Having updated contact lists, making sure that all staff and volunteers know how to shut off gas lines, and maintaining a first-aid kit are all basic actions which any food bank can and should take. Maryns also acknowledges that for individuals and families who face food insecurity as part of their daily lives, thinking about what they would do in a disaster situation may be overwhelming. One lesson he has learned very quickly is the importance of how the message is delivered. Rather than sending a message of fear, make the message an empowering one, he notes. For example, instead of emphasizing how unprepared people are, share what they can do to better prepare themselves. *Resource: [Hungering for Disaster Preparedness: Strategies, Resources and Tips for Food Pantries and Their Coalitions](http://www.solid-ground.org/publications/HDP.pdf), available on the web at <http://www.solid-ground.org/publications/HDP.pdf>.*

## Infrastructure: Facilities, Equipment & Technology

### Blueprints: Food Bank Design

Tri-Cities Food Bank  
Richland



Ten years ago a fire allowed Tri-Cities Food Bank, Richland (TCFB) to build a new facility from the ground up. Given this opportunity they sought to create the best possible food bank — food enters through the rear and leaves through the front. Customers arrive and enter a large waiting room where TCFB offers resource and referral information. People are then invited into a small, private side room for intake. For the physical food distribution, TCFB offers a shopping experience — customers shop up and down aisles selecting food from many available choices. “It makes them feel in control of the process and gives them dignity,” comments Executive Director Art King. In the back of the building is a large warehouse where food is received, with a loading dock and forklift. TCFB's Kennewick site has a similar layout, and they are now planning to replace the smaller Benton City location with a new, similar facility.

**What it Takes:** The biggest requirement to lay your food bank out like TCFB is lots of floor space. TCFB also boasts a large walk-in freezer and refrigerator, which allows them to serve a greater variety of foods. While not every food bank has this kind of space, for those that do, setting up a store-like environment with aisles, and providing a comfortable waiting area are great design features.

### Super Freeze: Combining Resources to Build Capacity

Kitsap County Food Bank Coalition  
Bremerton



To meet a common need for additional freezer space, members of the Kitsap County Food Bank Coalition pooled their EFAP proviso funds and put the money toward a large walk-in freezer to be owned by and located at Bremerton Foodline (BF). While BF owns the freezer, participating coalition members contribute to the operating costs of the freezer. The freezer has a separate electric meter, and BF invoices participating food banks for a one-eighth share of energy costs each quarter, plus \$25 per quarter toward a shared maintenance fund. The money is actually remitted to the coalition and then BF is reimbursed. Monica Bernhard, Director, says the formula is designed to recover costs, and that BF does not make any money toward overhead or other costs unrelated to the freezer itself. The freezer benefits everyone, allowing for bulk donations and purchases, and providing a back-up in case an individual food bank's freezer goes on the fritz. Not every coalition member participates in cost-sharing, because some boards were unwilling to commit either EFAP funds at the time of purchase or ongoing cost-sharing. In spite of this, use of the freezer is open to all organizations recognizing the community benefit.

**What it Takes:** A significant shared purchase like this requires advance planning. You will need to get commitments from each agency board. In this case, BF took the lead in presenting a proposal to the coalition for the capital investment and the cost recovery plan. This information was in turn presented to members' boards. Even though not everyone chose to participate, they were able to get a quorum to proceed, with BF investing additional funds beyond what other partners could.



## Ingenuity: DIY Tools

Community Services of Moses Lake, Inc  
Moses Lake



Community Services of Moses Lake, Inc. (CSML) has created a slip-sheet attachment to help unload truckloads of food not on pallets, such as USDA cereal. The cereal came in on a slip sheet — a thick sheet of cardboard — and needed to be dragged off the truck and placed onto a pallet. CSML did some research and discovered that the standard solution for pulling slip sheets, a special attachment for a fork lift, costs \$5,000. “I had a vision and talked to a friend of mine that’s a retired machinist. Together we’ve created a slip sheet puller/clamp for about \$45 that’s worked like a charm,” says Penny Archer, Assistant Executive Director.

**What it Takes:** Ingenuity is the main requirement to design a new tool. In this case, Archer had a vision and was able to communicate what she needed to a machinist who could fabricate the tool from existing tools — a vice grip and an angle iron. Archer also reports that others can benefit from their experience, since the fabricator says he would be more than happy to build one for other food banks — but you have to come to Moses Lake to pick it up!

## Enticing Skilled Volunteers to Work for You

Friends in Service to Him (FISH) Food Banks of Pierce County  
Tacoma



FISH Food Banks of Pierce County knew they needed technology assistance, and decided to put out a call for interns at the local community colleges. Instead of a student intern, FISH Food Banks lucked out when Tacoma Community College’s Director of Information Technology responded to their notice. She has installed computers, made technology improvements at a number of their eight sites, and is developing a program to track customer information.

**What it Takes:** Beth Elliott, Executive Director, highly recommends connecting with your local college to find a computer literate person who can assist your organization with customized solutions.





# Strengthening Board Leadership

## Deep Roots: Building a Community-Connected Board

Toppenish Community Chest

Toppenish



Toppenish Community Chest (TCC) established itself as an independent community organization just four years ago. Prior to that, the local food bank had run under the auspices of several area churches. A few short years later, they are well-known in the community and have a new facility funded by a successful capital campaign. Cecelia Chavez, Executive Director, is clear about how vital the board of directors is to TCC's success. "If you have a core group of at least 10 active, working people thinking ahead and using their connections, you can get somewhere," Chavez says. TCC's board consists of 15 people from different backgrounds — farmers, schools teachers, the CEO of the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, and so on. "Each member has an entity behind them, so they have extra help. Every time we choose a new member, it's something to do with a community service in town. This way, they can access more help, and more people know about the food bank. For example, farmers get us fresh fruit, and our teacher organizes the local school to do a food drive."

Because they want committed, active members, TCC has a thoughtful recruitment process which includes an in-person presentation of the food bank's work to the board candidate, covering "what we have done and what we expect from them." Expectations include working in the food bank at least monthly, and organizing one fundraising event per year. If there is a match, the new person is voted in. TCC feels it is important for board members to spend time at the food bank itself, sorting groceries or doing other daily work. This allows them to know what is really going on at TCC. Chavez adds, "When they see that the work they do pays off, they get interested in doing more. They see the clients getting help. It is working for us."

**What it Takes:** To build a strong board, it is important to have a thoughtful recruitment process, and be honest about what is required of board members. At TCC, community connections are a key requirement for new board members, and this strategy has extended their reach in the community. TCC has established a strong board culture that promotes service and accountability. Aspects of this culture include setting clear, specific expectations for board members, maintaining a focus on the organization's mission and accomplishments so that board members feel they are making a difference, and ensuring that board members have supportive organizations backing them up.

## Working from Within: Recruiting Leaders

Westminster Food Bank

Spokane



Westminster Food Bank (WFB) is supported by Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC) and six other local churches. They have had success in building a board from within their church memberships. WFB starts by inviting people within their affiliated congregations to volunteer. Once they are active volunteers, WFB leadership looks at the volunteers as potential board members based on their level of commitment. According to WPC Deacon Moderator Joyce McNamee, this approach is "quite good because coming on as a board member is a feather in their cap. Once they are on the board, you already know that they will be good facilitators and mentors for other folks." She also notes that as a church leader, she is always on the lookout for talent.

**What it Takes:** Emergency food programs that are faith-based or church sponsored have a natural pool of potential volunteers from which to draw. Engaging people can be difficult given the range of service opportunities available in a typical congregation, but this focus on service can also be a great asset since you may be able to recruit people with well-developed leadership skills. It's helpful to have a few people who identify, like McNamee, as a "people person." These folks help to build relationships and can be talent scouts within your organization, helping you discern which volunteers may be ready to step up to leadership positions such as board membership.

# Recruiting and Managing Volunteers

## One Call: Centralizing Volunteer Coordination

Hopelink  
Redmond



Hopelink has six food bank locations, and centralizes their volunteer coordination. The volunteer coordinator, located in their central office, processes all new volunteer applications. This provides a consistent system in terms of who gets approved as a volunteer, keeps applications in one place, and takes some of the work of volunteer management away from food bank staff. For example, the volunteer coordinator handles background checks on new volunteers, and schedules volunteer orientations. “I only have to worry about scheduling,” says Rus Sudakov, Food Bank Coordinator, Northshore Hopelink.

**What it Takes:** This system works best for a larger organization with multiple sites and enough volunteers to justify a coordinator position.

## Start Early: Utilizing High School Volunteers

Wapato Food Bank  
Wapato



Wapato Food Bank works with the local high school to actively recruit volunteers. Students need community service hours, and the school principal is willing to provide a list of students who need to fulfill hours and their phone numbers. Roy Cardenas, Basic Food Educator, calls the students directly and invites them to work at the food bank. “The extra manpower is great,” says Cardenas. “We usually have elderly women as volunteers, and it’s hard for them to lift 50 pound bags of beans and rice. I was picking up a lot of heavy items, and thought it would be nice to have help!” The students come in on an as needed basis, and are particularly helpful around the holidays. No extra supervision is necessary, and the school seems to select kids who are easy to manage.

**What it Takes:** Establishing a relationship with a school and having a designated person who can call students and schedule their shifts.

## Rethinking Support: Celebrating Volunteers

Hood Canal Food Bank  
Hoodsport



Two of the larger churches in the Hoodsport community have a luncheon for volunteers and customers of the Hood Canal Food Bank (HCFB) to celebrate them. All are welcome. HCFB provides some of the food and the church members bring other things, like salads. “It has been so successful! The people that come to the food bank really look forward to it — once a month they can go and have a nice lunch,” reports Director Marlene Boutwell. The luncheon is set up in the church, and the pastor comes and sits down with people at lunch. “It’s just once a month, but it’s meaningful to the people, and also the volunteers. It gives them camaraderie. They’re not just working, they’re also relaxing together.”

**What it Takes:** Community partner to host the luncheon, volunteers to cook and serve. Could be started on a quarterly basis at first.

In 2006, 1.66 million Washington volunteers dedicated 265.8 million hours of service. Nearly 25 percent of all volunteers either collected, prepared, distributed or served food.

*Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life  
Corporation for National and Community Service*

# Unexpected Partners: Working with Inmate Crews & Court-Mandated Volunteers

## Lewis County Food Bank Coalition

Centralia



Lewis County Food Bank Coalition (LCFBC) utilizes inmate labor from the county jail's inmate release program. These inmates work shifts at the food bank and must be supervised by trained volunteers. LCFBC picks up the inmates at the jail for their shift, and returns them to the jail at the end of the workday. "We decided to do it because the inmates are good workers, and most of our volunteers are older, and we're able to always know that we can have four pretty able-bodied people there all day to load and unload, clean, and help us with light maintenance in the warehouse. It's a matter of free, good, reliable, consistent labor work," says Bonnie Pedersen, Coalition Treasurer. For the inmates, the work provides an opportunity to get out and be exposed to a positive work environment. For some, it is their first experience of volunteering. They have been very good workers, and LCFBC depends on their contributions to keep their food bank running. When they moved, volunteers from the jail contributed professional skills such as painting and carpentry as well.

**What it Takes:** Inmate volunteers must be supervised at all times. The Sheriff's Department provides training to LCFBC volunteers who will be providing supervision, and it is important to follow the Sheriff Department's guidelines. LCFBC provides meals for the volunteers during their shift. Transportation must also be provided. LCFBC generally has a crew of four inmates come for each shift, so a volunteer usually picks them up using an LCFBC van. The first step is to establish a relationship with the Sheriff's Department or equivalent public agency in your area.

## Woodland Community Service Center

Woodland



Woodland Community Service Center (WCSC) utilizes volunteers who are court-mandated to complete community service hours. These are individuals referred through the local sheriff's office or the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC), and may include recently released inmates and people on parole or probation. WCSC typically has anywhere from one to seven volunteers referred by DOC for community service. Most are young men, capable of heavy lifting and other manual work that needs to be done around the food bank. "The results have been amazing," says Sheri Monge, Executive Director. "In my experience, we had only one person who didn't fit in. Most want to please and fit in with the community." Working with DOC, it is possible to screen out offenders that might not be appropriate for your site. WCSC screens out convicted pedophiles since some of their programs on-site serve children. Since WCSC offers a variety of community services including case management, some volunteers may later qualify to receive services. Getting to know them as they volunteer helps staff assess whether they are serious about making other changes in their lives.

**What it Takes:** A requirement for working with court-mandated volunteers is having staff or volunteers who feel comfortable supervising others. Monge does recommend authoritative supervision from the start, establishing who is in charge and clear expectations for working hard. A good relationship with the staff person at the county and/or state staff level that provides referrals is helpful to get the most appropriate referrals. There is an application to fill out to become a recognized DOC community service site, and you should also contact the county regarding their process for being listed.

"The results have been amazing..."

— Sheri Monge, Executive Director  
Woodland Community Service Center

## Tips from the Field for Managing Volunteers

- **Set clear expectations for volunteers.** The Salvation Army (SA) in Anacortes has a written volunteer agreement that outlines expectations of volunteers, such as notifying SA in advance if they are unable to work a shift, signing in and out, attending training and protecting client confidentiality. They also use a volunteer orientation checklist.
- **Pay attention to group dynamics.** At Bainbridge's Helpline House, the volunteer coordinators have noticed that volunteers stay involved and enjoy their work more when they feel they are part of a cohesive team. They watch for personality matches and try to group people that work well together.
- **Convey your values and philosophy to volunteers during training.** Helpline House has also developed written materials to help communicate their approach and values to volunteers. *The following is excerpted from their handout about communications:*

*What do we want to communicate?*

- > *The interdependence of those in the human community ("No man is an island")*
- > *The dignity and worth of every human being (Acceptance)*
- > *The validity of asking for help (All of us have problems some of the time.)*
- > *The need to give as well as to receive (Each has the ability to be contributing members of our community.)*
- > *The recognition of the difficulty in making systems work*
- > *The need for information, time and attention to solve problems and make choices*
- > *The assurance that information shared will be confidential*
- > *The role is of a concerned neighbor (Peer)*

*What we can offer is time, attention, accurate information, connections and a way to feel worthwhile.*

- **Deal directly with the issue of hungry volunteers!** Agencies develop different policies regarding having customers volunteer — some swear by it, and other believe it is best not to have individuals wear both hats. The most important thing is to clarify and communicate your organization's policy.
  - At SA Anacortes, volunteers are given the agency's policy in writing, stating in part: "Volunteers are strictly prohibited from retaining food items for themselves. If there is a volunteer who is in need of assistance they are invited to fill out the proper paperwork during hours of operation. No individual will be denied food assistance, however, they do need to follow the proper channels."
  - St. Leo's Food Connection (SLFC) Director Kevin Glackin-Coley comments, "The best thing and the toughest thing about working here is that we have volunteers from the community in need. It is what allows us to keep our doors open long hours, and it keeps the face of hunger right in front of us." To recognize volunteers and also to reduce the temptation to take food during volunteer shifts, SLFC has instituted a shopping policy that anyone who works more than 10 hours per two week period can get an extra shopping period. However, they also make it clear that people can't do shopping as food comes in, taking what they want.

Whatever your organization's policy, it's important to remind volunteers of the rules regularly, to reduce temptation and opportunity to steal food, and to ask people who violate your policy to leave.

- **Recognize and adapt to changing volunteer trends.** With more baby boomers delaying retirement and more competing demands on people's time, food banks have trouble recruiting volunteers willing to work one or several shifts per week as has been customary in past years. Patricia King, Pantry Shelf Director comments, "When I first started, people were working every Tuesday or every Friday. It's been increasingly hard to get people to sign up for every week. I started asking people for one shift a month, and they knew they could trade their shift if needed. We attract more volunteers with this flexible system."
- **Celebrate!** Recognize your volunteers in large and small ways. Social events such as an annual volunteer recognition luncheon, a birthday party for a long-term volunteer, or holiday celebration can help build community among your volunteers.

# Resources

Any part of a *Recipe for Success*, includes having good tools. Below are some of our favorite tools. Categories include: advocacy: state & federal, board development, desktop tools, emergency food provision, food safety & nutrition, fundraising, information on hunger, marketing, organizational strength & capacity, other service providers, technology, and volunteer management.

In addition to the resources listed below, the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) offers over twenty different training documents on their website. Visit [www.cted.wa.gov/site/666/default.aspx](http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/666/default.aspx).

## Advocacy:

### Federal

**Bread for All**, nationwide Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying our nation's decisionmakers. [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

**Center on Budget & Policy Priorities**, organization working at the federal and state levels on fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals. [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)

**Coalition on Human Needs**, alliance of national organizations working to promote public policies that address the needs of low-income and other vulnerable people. [www.chn.org](http://www.chn.org)

**Community Food Security Coalition**, coalition of North American organizations, dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

**Food Research and Action Center**, national nonprofit working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

### State

**Children's Alliance**, Washington's statewide child advocacy organization. [www.childrealliance.org](http://www.childrealliance.org)

**Policy Watch**, bulletin about issues and events in Olympia during the state legislative session. Provides information but does not take positions. <http://depts.washington.edu/sswwweb/policyw/>

**Statewide Poverty Action Network**, works to eliminate the root causes of poverty in Washington, organizing social action and influencing decisions in the state capitol. [www.povertyaction.org](http://www.povertyaction.org)

**Washington State Budget and Policy Center**, provides credible, independent and accessible information and analyses of state fiscal issues with particular attention to the impacts on low and moderate-income persons. [www.budgetandpolicy.org](http://www.budgetandpolicy.org)

## Board Development:

**Board Café**, a monthly enewsletter that offers tips for board members, [www.boardcafe.org](http://www.boardcafe.org)

**BoardSource**, offers tools to help build an effective nonprofit board. [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org)

**United Way of King County**, nonprofit resources page featuring downloadable forms for board assessment, board composition analysis and more. [www.uwkc.org/nonprofit/governance](http://www.uwkc.org/nonprofit/governance)



## Desktop Tools:

**Babblefish**, listing of online language translators. [www.babblefish.com](http://www.babblefish.com)

**Meet-O-Matic**, propose and schedule meetings online and invite participants using your own email system, then monitor responses. [www.meetomatic.com](http://www.meetomatic.com)

**Merriam-Webster**, dictionary and thesaurus with audio pronunciation. [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)

## Emergency Food Provision How-To's:

**Charity Food Programs That Can End Hunger In America**, by John Arnold, Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, 2004. [www.wmgleaners.org](http://www.wmgleaners.org)

**“Hungering for Disaster Preparedness: Strategies, Resources and Tips for Food Pantries and Their Coalitions,”** available on the web at <http://www.solid-ground.org/publications/HDP.pdf>.

**Serving Up Justice: How to Design an Emergency Feeding Program and Build Community Food Security**, by Caroline Fanning and Lani M'cleod, available from World Hunger Year, 212-629-8850. [www.worldhungeryear.org](http://www.worldhungeryear.org)

**Washington Food Coalition**, offers technical assistance to emergency food providers in Washington State. 1-877-729-0501 or 206-729-0501, [www.wafoodcoalition.org](http://www.wafoodcoalition.org)

## Food Safety & Nutrition:

**Food Service Rule**, guide to food safety standards from the Washington Department of Health. [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/food/FoodRuleMain.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/food/FoodRuleMain.htm)

**Recipes for Commodities**, booklet of recipes for less common USDA Commodity products. [www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/recipes/hhp/HHP-CreativeRecipes-rev2.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/recipes/hhp/HHP-CreativeRecipes-rev2.pdf)

**TEFAP Commodity Fact Sheets and Recipes**, [www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/cfs\\_tefap.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/cfs_tefap.htm)

**USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline**, Food safety questions? They have answers. 1-888-674-6854, [www.fsis.usda.gov/Food\\_Safety\\_Education/USDA\\_Meat\\_&\\_Poultry\\_Hotline/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/USDA_Meat_&_Poultry_Hotline/index.asp)

**WSU Extension Nutrition Education**, programs offered to help Washington residents make healthier food choices, extend their food resources, manage their diabetes to live a healthier life and handle food safely to keep their families well. <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>

## Fundraising:

**Foundation Center**, features information and resources on grants, catalogue of nonprofit literature, and search for funders in your area. [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org)

**The Grassroots Fundraising Journal**, fundraising tips and tools. 1-888-458-8588, [www.grassrootsfundraising.org](http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org)

**How to Succeed in Fundraising by Really Trying**, tips from philanthropist Lewis B. Cullman on how to execute a fundraising campaign. Witty and brief, available at [www.LewisCullman.com](http://www.LewisCullman.com).

**Feinstein Foundation**, has given away \$1 million each spring for the past ten years to hunger fighting agencies as part of its National Challenge. [www.feinsteinfoundation.org](http://www.feinsteinfoundation.org)

**Kraft Foods, Inc.**, Community Nutrition Program, announces annual Request for Proposal (RFP) and more. [http://kraft.com/responsibility/contributions\\_communities.aspx](http://kraft.com/responsibility/contributions_communities.aspx)

**MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger**, national nonprofit agency that allocates funding to prevent and alleviate hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds. [www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)

**Northwest Development Officers Association (NDOA)**, provides comprehensive training opportunities and support for nonprofit fundraisers. [www.ndoa.org](http://www.ndoa.org)

**Philanthropy Northwest**, association that promotes effectiveness in philanthropy. The 'Looking for a Grant?' page features tips and resources for grant-seekers. [www.philanthropynw.org](http://www.philanthropynw.org)

## Information on Hunger & Food Security Initiatives:

**World Hunger Year, WHY**, is a national and international leader in the fight against hunger and poverty, with an emphasis on supporting grassroots organizations. [www.worldhungeryear.org](http://www.worldhungeryear.org)

**America's Second Harvest — The Nation's Food Bank Network**, the largest charitable domestic hunger-relief organization in the country. Works through a nationwide network of distribution centers. Provides information and statistics about hunger and foodbanking. [www.secondharvest.org](http://www.secondharvest.org)

## Marketing:

**Food Stamp Program Photo Gallery**, offers free photographs for use in communicating Program nutrition education and outreach messages. [http://grande.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp\\_album.php](http://grande.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp_album.php)

**Smart Chart**, a planning tool which helps nonprofits develop high-impact communications strategies. [www.smartchart.org](http://www.smartchart.org)

**Stock.XCHNG**, one of the leading free stock photography sites on the web with over 200,000 photos by more than 15,000 photographers. [www.sxc.hu](http://www.sxc.hu)

## Organizational Strength & Capacity:

**CompassPoint Nonprofit Services**, includes a resources directory, featuring the Nonprofit Genie FAQ section with everything from board development to federal form 990 to volunteer management. [www.compasspoint.org](http://www.compasspoint.org)

**Free Management Library**, online library with over 75 searchable topics on activities necessary to plan, organize, lead, and coordinate activities in an organization. [www.managementhelp.org](http://www.managementhelp.org)

**Fieldstone Alliance**, practical nonprofit publications on a range of management and community organizing topics. [www.fieldstonealliance.org](http://www.fieldstonealliance.org)

**How to Form and Maintain a Nonprofit in Washington State**, free publication from the King County Bar Association with legal advice and sample bylaws, [www.kcba.org/ScriptContent/KCBA/publications/pdf/nonprofit/NPHandbook.pdf](http://www.kcba.org/ScriptContent/KCBA/publications/pdf/nonprofit/NPHandbook.pdf)

**IKNOW**, Interactive Knowledge for Nonprofit Organizations Worldwide, a clearinghouse for links to websites containing nonprofit information. [www.iknow.org](http://www.iknow.org)

**Innovation Network**, national organization offering web-based tools and program planning, with some resources available for free to those who register. [www.innonet.org](http://www.innonet.org)

**Kellogg Foundation**, offers toolkits on communication, evaluation, and policy, and a host of other free publications. [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org)

**Nonprofit Facilities Financing**, program of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC), helps organizations access below-market rate interest loans — through bonds — to fund a wide variety of projects. 1-800-767-4663, [www.wshfc.org](http://www.wshfc.org)

**Third Sector New England**, provides support, training and management resources to strengthen individual nonprofit organizations and to build the capacity of the nonprofit community. Visit the Articles page in the Resources section. [www.tsne.org](http://www.tsne.org)

**Alliance of Nonprofits for Insurance, Risk Retention Group**, publishes a number of free guides to risk management and understanding your insurance needs, for example, developing a vehicle safety program and appropriate policies, <http://www.ani-rrg.org/>

**3 Days, 3 Ways**, public motivation campaign sponsored by the King County Office of Emergency Management to help individuals, families, and communities prepare for emergencies and disasters. [www.govlink.org/3days3ways](http://www.govlink.org/3days3ways)

**Washington Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster**, WAVOAD, works within the state to improve responses to disaster situations through collaboration among its members. (360) 479-5176, [www.wavoad.org](http://www.wavoad.org)

## Other Services & Providers:

**Columbia Legal Services**, nonprofit organization employing lawyers and legal workers who provide legal assistance to low-income and special needs people and organizations in Washington. [www.columbialegal.org](http://www.columbialegal.org)

**Community Voice Mail**, makes a phone number with voice mail possible for thousands of people each year. [www.cvm.org](http://www.cvm.org)

**Washington Attorneys Assisting Community Organizations**, connects nonprofit organizations statewide with free business legal counsel through volunteer attorneys. [www.waaco.org](http://www.waaco.org)

**WithinReach**, statewide organization providing resources for maternal, child, and family health. Operates several toll-free information and referral lines. [www.withinreachwa.org](http://www.withinreachwa.org)

## Technology:

**Tech Soup**, a nonprofit technical support organization that offers nearly free software by some of the biggest companies and provides a monthly update with tips. [www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)

**NPower**, technology-related technical assistance for nonprofits, including classes and online technology assessment and planning tools, [www.npower.org](http://www.npower.org)

**Del.icio.us**, social bookmarks manager which allows you to save and access bookmarked websites from any web connection. <http://del.icio.us/>

**Ebase**, free database program, designed specifically for non-profits by nonprofits. [www.ebase.org](http://www.ebase.org)

**Idealware**, free candid Consumer-Reports-style reviews and articles about software of interest to nonprofits. [www.idealware.org](http://www.idealware.org)

**Survey Monkey**, create professional online surveys quickly and easily, free for small surveys. [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

## Volunteer Management:

**Idealist**, a comprehensive networking site for nonprofit organizations and volunteers. [www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org)

**National Volunteer Week**, typically in April, is a great time to recognize and show appreciation for volunteers. [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

**Volunteer Match**, a leading website for connecting volunteers and nonprofit volunteer opportunities, [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org). Craig's List is also a good place to list, <http://geo.craigslist.org/iso/us/wa>, and your local United Way may also assist with volunteer recruitment.

**Volunteer Resource**, library of resources and effective practices on volunteering and volunteer management. [www.volunteerresource.org](http://www.volunteerresource.org)

**Congressional Hunger Center**, non-profit anti-hunger leadership training organization located in Washington, DC. The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program places participants with local hunger-fighting organizations around the country for 6 months. [www.hungercenter.org](http://www.hungercenter.org)

## The ABC's of Emergency Food Provision in Washington State

This is a list of the most commonly used acronyms we hear. It is not meant to be exhaustive. We welcome additions. This list was adapted from a Seattle Food Committee publication. If you would like to “steal” this document, please simply contact the WFC office.

**First Harvest**: Rotary First Harvest, conduit between farmers and emergency food system

**2nd Harvest**: 2nd Harvest Inland Northwest, Eastern WA food distribution center, A2H member

**A2H**: America's Second Harvest—The Nation's Food Bank Network, national distribution network

**AHNC**: Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition, statewide advocacy coalition

**CA**: Children's Alliance, statewide children's advocacy organization

**CAN**: Children's Action Network (Children's Alliance), web advocacy alert system

**CFNP**: Community Food & Nutrition Program, federal funding

**CSFP**: Commodity Supplemental Food Program, federal nutrition program

**CTED**: Community, Trade and Economic Development (WA State Dept. of)

**DCTED**: See CTED

**DOH**: Department of Health

**EFAP**: Emergency Food Assistance Program, state funding for food banks and tribal food voucher programs

**EFN**: Emergency Food Network, Pierce County food distribution center

**FEMA**: Federal Emergency Management Agency, federal agency

**FLL**: Food Lifeline, Western WA food distribution center, A2H member

**FRAC**: Food Research & Action Center, national anti-hunger non-profit

**MPC**: Meals Partnership Coalition, Seattle-based coalition of meal programs

**OFB**: Oregon Food Bank, Portland-based food distribution center, A2H member

**NWH**: Northwest Harvest, statewide hunger relief organization

**SFC**: Seattle Food Committee, Seattle coalition of food banks

**TEFAP**: The Emergency Food Assistance Program, federal commodities program

**VOA**: Volunteers of America, national non-profit with local members

**WIC**: Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, federal nutrition program

**WFC**: Washington Food Coalition, statewide coalition of emergency food providers

**WRAHC**: Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium, regional anti-hunger consortium

**WSFNC**: Washington State Food & Nutrition Coalition, statewide coalition

## Glossary

**Commodities:** foods provided by the United States government at no charge to qualifying citizens.

**Distribution center:** an agency that collects, warehouses, and distributes food to emergency food programs and other charities on a regional, county, or statewide basis.

**Emergency food:** food that is given to individuals who do not have the means to acquire that food themselves, typically from either a food bank or meal program.

**Emergency food provider:** an individual who works or volunteers at a food bank, food pantry, meal program, or distribution center.

**EFAP Lead agency:** A Contractor that may subcontract with one or more local food banks to provide emergency food assistance to individuals, and with distribution centers to provide emergency food to food banks.

**Food bank:** An emergency food assistance program that distributes unprepared food without charge to its clients, is open a fixed number of hours and days each week or month, and such hours and days are publicly posted.

**Food pantry:** In Washington, this term is synonymous with “food bank.”

**Gleaning:** the practice of gathering the extra crops that are left in the fields after a harvest. Food Rescue refers to the collection of perishable or prepared foods from wholesale and/or retail sources, such as supermarkets and restaurants. These two methods of collection put food to use that would otherwise be wasted. (*World Hunger Year*).

**Meal program:** those programs which serve meals to the general public at no charge as a means of ensuring that they are not hungry.

### Got a Good Idea?

Washington Food Coalition would welcome  
the chance to hear from you!

Just call or write.

Washington Food Coalition is a member-based  
statewide coalition of emergency food providers.

To learn more about membership, visit us online at  
[www.wafoodcoalition.org](http://www.wafoodcoalition.org) or call us at 1-877-729-0501.

## Contact Information

### **2nd Harvest Inland Northwest**

1234 E Front Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99202  
(509) 534-6678  
[www.2-harvest.org](http://www.2-harvest.org)

### **Anti-Hunger Coalition Bellingham**

1824 Ellis Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
(360) 676-0392

### **Asian Counseling Referral Service**

720 8th Avenue S, Ste 200  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 292-5714  
[www.acrs.org](http://www.acrs.org)

### **Ballard Food Bank**

7001 24th Avenue NW  
Seattle, WA 98117  
(206) 789-7800

### **Bellingham Community Meal**

2100 Electric Avenue #118  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
(360) 676-9399

### **Bellingham Food Bank**

1824 Ellis Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
(360) 676-0392

### **Bremerton Foodline**

PO Box 824  
Bremerton, WA 98337  
(360) 479-6188

### **Capital Clubhouse**

618 7th Avenue SE  
Olympia, WA 98501  
(360) 357-2582  
[www.capitalclubhouse.org](http://www.capitalclubhouse.org)

### **Care and Share Food Bank**

PO Box 671  
Grand Coulee, WA 99133  
(509) 633-2742

### **Community Services of Moses Lake, Inc.**

PO Box 683  
Moses Lake, WA 98837  
(509) 765-8101

### **Congressional Hunger Center**

Hall of the States Building  
400 North Capitol Street NW  
Suite G100  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 547-7022  
[www.hungercenter.org](http://www.hungercenter.org)

### **Copalis Community Church Food Bank**

3134 SR 109, PO Box 279  
Copalis Beach, WA 98535  
(360) 289-2971

### **Des Moines Area Food Bank**

PO Box 98788  
Des Moines, WA 98198  
(206) 878-2660

### **Emergency Food Network**

3318 92nd Street S  
Lakewood, WA 98499  
(253) 584-1040  
[www.efoodnet.org](http://www.efoodnet.org)

### **Feed Spokane!**

500 S. Stone Street  
Spokane, WA 99202  
(509) 570-3951  
[www.feedspokane.com](http://www.feedspokane.com)

### **FISH Food Banks of Pierce County**

1224 South I Street  
Tacoma, WA 98405  
(253) 383-3164

### **Food Lifeline**

1702 NE 150th Street  
Shoreline, WA 98155  
(800) 404-7543 or (206) 545-6600  
[www.foodlifeline.org](http://www.foodlifeline.org)

### **Food Resources**

Solid Ground  
1501 N. 45th Street  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 694-6757  
[www.fremontpublic.org](http://www.fremontpublic.org)

### **Gleaner's Coalition**

225 Cushing Street NW  
Olympia, WA 98502  
(360) 705-2375

### **Good Cheer Food Bank**

PO Box 144  
Langley, WA 98260  
(360) 221-6454  
[www.goodcheer.org](http://www.goodcheer.org)

### **Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties**

Food Bank Distribution Center  
PO Box 616  
Hoquiam, WA 98550  
(360) 532-6315

### **Greenwood Food Bank**

9747 Greenwood Avenue N  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 782-6731

### **Helpline House**

282 Knechtel Way NE  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110  
(206) 842-7621  
[www.helplinehouse.org](http://www.helplinehouse.org)

### **Hood Canal Food Bank**

PO Box 995  
Hoodsport, WA 98548  
(360) 877-6623

### **Hopelink**

16225 NE 87th Street, Suite 1A  
Redmond, WA 98052  
(425) 869-6024  
[www.hope-link.org](http://www.hope-link.org)

### **Hunger-Free Thurston County**

See Thurston County Food Bank

### **Left Foot Organics**

PO Box 12772  
Olympia, WA 98508  
(360) 754-1849  
[www.leftfootorganics.org](http://www.leftfootorganics.org)

### **GRuB**

711 State Avenue NE  
Olympia, WA 98506  
(360) 753-5522  
[www.goodgrub.org](http://www.goodgrub.org)

### **Inter-Faith Treasure House**

PO Box 815  
Camas, WA 98607  
(360) 834-4181



**Jewish Family Service**

1601 16th Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98122  
(206) 461-3240 x3174  
[www.jfsseattle.org](http://www.jfsseattle.org)

**Jubilee Ministry of Prosser**

PO Box 66  
Prosser, WA 99350  
(509) 786-3033

**Kettle Falls Community Chest Food Bank**

PO Box 1145  
Kettle Falls, WA 99141  
(509) 738-2326

**Kitsap County Food Bank Coalition/ c/o St. Vincent de Paul – Bremerton**

1137 N Callow  
Bremerton, WA 98312  
(360) 479-7017

**Lettuce Link**

Solid Ground  
1501 N 45th St.  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 694-6754  
[www.solid-ground.org](http://www.solid-ground.org)

**Lewis County Food Bank Coalition**

1709 Seminary Hill Road  
Centralia, WA 98531  
(360) 748-8149

**Lifelong AIDS Alliance**

1002 E Seneca Street  
Seattle, WA 98122  
(206) 957-1662  
[www.llaa.org](http://www.llaa.org)

**Loon Lake Food Pantry & Resource Center**

PO Box 64  
Loon Lake, WA 99148  
(509) 233-8450

**Lower Columbia Community Action Council**

PO Box 2129  
Longview, WA 98632  
(360) 425-3430 x281  
[www.lccac.org](http://www.lccac.org)

**Maltby Food Bank**

PO Box 1256  
Snohomish, WA 98290  
(360) 668-4429

**Meals Partnership Coalition**

PO Box 1231  
Clinton, WA 98236  
(206) 396-8123

**Multi-Service Center**

1200 So 336th Street  
Federal Way, WA 98003  
(253) 838-6810  
[www.multi-servicecenter.com](http://www.multi-servicecenter.com)

**My Sister's Pantry**

209 S J Street  
Tacoma, WA 98405  
(253) 627-0129

**North County Community Food Bank**

PO Box 2106  
Battle Ground, WA 98604  
(360) 687-7126  
[www.nccfoodbank.com](http://www.nccfoodbank.com)

**North Helpline**

PO Box 25875  
Seattle, WA 98165  
(206) 367-3477

**Northwest Harvest**

PO Box 12272  
Seattle, WA 98102  
(800) 722-6924 or (206) 625-0755  
[www.northwestharvest.org](http://www.northwestharvest.org)

**Ocean Shores Food Bank**

PO Box 1419  
Ocean Shores, WA 98569  
(360) 289-2164

**Operation Sack Lunch**

PO Box 1231  
Clinton, WA 98236  
(206) 396-8123  
[www.opsacklunch.org](http://www.opsacklunch.org)

**Oregon Food Bank**

PO Box 55370  
Portland, OR 97238  
(503) 282-0555  
[www.oregonfoodbank.org](http://www.oregonfoodbank.org)

**Pantry Shelf**

325 S. 1st  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
(509) 525-1093

**Providence Regina House**

8201 10th Avenue S #6  
Seattle, WA 98108  
(206) 763-9204  
[www.providence.org/washington/regina\\_house/default.htm](http://www.providence.org/washington/regina_house/default.htm)

**ReachOut Food Bank**

PO Box 907  
Ocean Park, WA 98640  
(360) 665-6567

**Resource Distribution Council**

4020 S 56th Street, Suite 100  
Tacoma, WA 98409  
(253) 229-2042

**RotaClinic at North Helpline**

PO Box 55983  
Seattle, WA 98155  
(425) 501-4526

**Rotary First Harvest**

PO Box 94117  
Seattle, WA 98124  
(206) 236-0408  
[www.firstharvest.org](http://www.firstharvest.org)

**Rural Resources Community Action**

956 S Main Street, Suite A  
Colville, WA 99114  
(509) 685-6053  
[www.ruralresources.org](http://www.ruralresources.org)

**Salvation Army, Anacortes**

PO Box 303  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
(360) 293-6682

**Salvation Army, Walla Walla**

PO Box 1244  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
(509) 529-9470

**Seattle Food Committee**

c/o Food Resources  
1501 N 45th St.  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 694-6700  
[www.solid-ground.org](http://www.solid-ground.org)

**Sky Valley Food Bank**

PO Box 724  
Monroe, WA 98272  
(360) 794-7959  
[www.svfoodbank.org](http://www.svfoodbank.org)

**Solid Ground**

1501 N 45th St.  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 694-6700  
[www.solid-ground.org](http://www.solid-ground.org)

**South King County Food Coalition**

(206) 878-2660  
[www.skfcf.org](http://www.skfcf.org)

**South Kitsap Helpline**

1351 Bay Street  
Port Orchard, WA 98366  
(360) 876-4089

**Spokane Valley Partners**

PO Box 14165  
Spokane, WA 99214  
(509) 927-1153

**St. Leo's Food Connection**

710 S. 13th Street  
Tacoma, WA 98105  
(253) 383-5048  
[www.foodconnection.org](http://www.foodconnection.org)

**St. Mary's Food Bank**

611 20th Ave S  
Seattle, WA 98144  
(206) 324-7100 x21

**Tenino Community Service Center**

PO Box 1239  
Tenino, WA 98589  
(360) 264-5505

**Thurston County Food Bank**

220 Thurston Avenue NE  
Olympia, WA 98501  
(360) 352-8597  
[www.thurstoncountyfoodbank.org](http://www.thurstoncountyfoodbank.org)

**Toppenish Community Chest**

PO Box 408  
Toppenish, WA 98948  
(509) 865-5311

**Tri-Cities Food Bank**

321 Wellsian Way  
Richland, WA 99352  
(509) 943-2795

**University District Food Bank**

4731 15th Avenue NE  
Seattle, WA 98105  
(206) 523-7060  
[www.udistrictfoodbank.org](http://www.udistrictfoodbank.org)

**Wapato Food Bank**

118 Ivy Street  
Wapato, WA 98951  
(877) 877-6114

**West Seattle Food Bank**

3419 SW Morgan Street  
West Seattle, WA 98126  
(206) 932-9023  
[www.westseattlefoodbank.org](http://www.westseattlefoodbank.org)

**Westminster Food Bank**

2705 W Boone  
Spokane, WA 99201  
(509) 329-0531

**Willapa Food Bank**

PO Box 528  
Raymond, WA 98577  
(360) 942-2566

**Women's & Children's Free Restaurant**

1620 N. Monroe  
Spokane, WA 99205  
(509) 324-1995  
[www.wcfrspokane.org](http://www.wcfrspokane.org)

**Women's Resource Center of North Central Washington**

PO Box 2051  
Wenatchee, WA 98801  
(509) 662-0121

**Woodland Community Service Center**

PO Box 1475  
Woodland, WA 98674  
(360) 225-9998  
[www.lewisriver.com/wcsc](http://www.lewisriver.com/wcsc)

**Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic**

518 West First Avenue  
Toppenish, WA 98948  
(509) 865-5898  
[www.yvfwc.com](http://www.yvfwc.com)



**Washington Food Coalition (WFC)**  
PO Box 95752  
Seattle, WA 98145  
**TEL:** 206-729-0501 or 1-877-729-0501  
**FAX:** 206-729-0501  
[www.wafoodcoalition.org](http://www.wafoodcoalition.org)

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